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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1	Definition of Anxiety
Chapter 2	Myths And Misinterpretations
Chapter 3	The One Move
Chapter 4	Applications of the One Move
Chapter 5	General Anxiety
Chapter 6	To Medicate or Not
Chapter 7	Tapping into Your Hidden Potential
	Conclusion

Introduction

Standing in a supermarket queue, it's been a long wait but only one customer to go before you make it to the cashier. Wait, what was that sensation? An unpleasant feeling forms in your throat, your chest feels tighter, now a sudden shortness of breath, and what do you know—your heart skips a beat. "Please, God, not here."

A quick scan of the territory—is it threatening? Four unfriendly faces queue behind, one person in front. Pins and needles seem to prick you through your left arm, you feel slightly dizzy, and then the explosion of fear as you dread the worst. You are about to have a panic attack.

There is no doubt in your mind now that this is going to be a big one. Okay, focus: Remember what you have been taught, and it is time now to apply the coping techniques. Begin the deep breathing exercise your doctor recommended. In through the nose, out through the mouth. Think relaxing thoughts, and again, while breathing in, think "Relax," and then breathe out. But it doesn't seem to be having any positive effect; in fact, just concentrating on breathing is making you feel self-conscious and more uptight.

Okay, coping technique 2:

Gradual muscle relaxation. Tense both shoulders, hold for 10 seconds, then release. Try it again. No; still no difference. The anxiety is getting worse and the very fact that you are out of coping techniques worsens your panic. If only you were surrounded by your family, or a close friend were beside you so you could feel more confident in dealing with this situation.

Now, the adrenaline is really pumping through your system, your body is

tingling with uncomfortable sensations, and now the dreaded feeling of losing complete control engulfs your emotions. No one around you has any idea of the sheer terror you are experiencing. For them, it's just a regular day and another frustratingly slow queue in the supermarket.

You are out of options. Time for Plan C. The most basic coping skill of all is "fleeing." Excuse yourself from the queue; you are slightly embarrassed as it is now that it is your turn to pay. The cashier is looking bewildered as you leave your shopping behind and stroll towards the door. There is no time for excuses—you need to be alone. You leave the supermarket and get into your car to ride it out alone. Could this be the big one? The one you fear will push you over the edge mentally and physically. Ten minutes later the panic subsides.

It's 10:30 a.m. How are you going to make it through the rest of the day?

Does this situation sound in any way familiar? Maybe the bodily sensations were a little different. Maybe it happened to you for the first time on a plane, in the dentist chair, or even at home, while doing nothing in particular. If you have ever had what has become known as a "panic attack," take comfort in the fact that you are by no means alone.

A panic attack always comes with the acute sense of impending doom. You feel you are either about to lose your mind or one of your vital bodily functions is about to cease functioning and you will end your days right there among the canned goods and frozen food.

You are by no means alone; you're not even one in a million. In America, it is estimated that almost 5% of the population suffer from some form of anxiety disorder. For some, it may be the infrequent panic attacks; for others, it can be so frequent that it inhibits them from leaving their home. Frequent panic attacks often develop into what medical physicians refer to as an "anxiety disorder."

One of the first steps to regaining control of your life is getting helpful information. This book will give you that, and more. The beginning of your recovery starts here. What you will learn from this book is that there is a very good chance you are about to end the cycle of panic attacks in your life. However, I do not want to make exaggerated statements about the technique in this book, (others have kindly done that for me.) The bottom line is your life can be as it once was. In fact, by following and applying the techniques in this book, you will learn not only to regain the carefree life you remember once having, but will also gain new confidence in living. Your answer to living free from “panic” or “anxiety attacks” is at hand.

This book demonstrates that the panic that you have experienced will be the very key to your courage and success. The fear you experience, when “owned” and not “controlled,” is actually your best ally. It is the fuel that will drive your new life. Make no mistake—you are now reading the very material that will be the catalyst for your recovery. The only question left is: Why didn’t you have the answers sooner? Why had you wasted so much time living in fear?

I am going to reveal a simple technique called the “One Move” that will tackle the very core of your panic attacks. Following that, I will teach you the four tools to create a sturdy buffer zone between you and anxiety that will ensure you can rid yourself of the lingering unease and background anxiety that is so often a complaint of people who suffer from high anxiety and panic attacks.

First, let’s begin the road to recovery by examining what a panic attack is, and some of the terminology commonly used when addressing panic attacks. While many of you may have read almost everything you can possibly read relating to panic and anxiety, but I would ask you to read down through the book and not skip ahead as I assure you this book offers something very effective and helpful in managing these conditions.”

Chapter 1

The obvious: Panic attacks are caused by high anxiety.

Anxiety is probably the most basic of all emotions. While anxiety, by its nature, is an unpleasant sensation, it is not by any means dangerous.

One of the biggest myths surrounding anxiety is that it is harmful and can lead to a number of various life-threatening conditions.

Definition of Anxiety

Anxiety is defined as a state of apprehension or fear resulting from the anticipation of real or imagined threat, event, or situation. It is one of the most common human emotions experienced by people at some point in their lives. However, most people who have never experienced a panic attack, or extreme anxiety, fail to realize the terrifying nature of the experience. Extreme dizziness, blurred vision, tingling and feelings of breathlessness—and that's just the tip of the iceberg!

When these sensations occur and people do not understand why, they feel they have contracted an illness, or a serious mental condition. The threat of losing complete control seems very real and naturally very terrifying.

Fight/Flight Response

I am sure most of you have heard of the fight/flight response as an explanation for your condition. Have you made the connection between this response and the unusual sensations you experience during and after a panic attack?

Anxiety is a response to a danger or threat. It is so named because all of its effects are aimed toward either fighting or fleeing from the danger. Thus, the sole purpose of anxiety is to protect the individual from harm. It was vital in the daily survival of our ancient ancestors—when faced with some danger, an automatic response would take over that propels them to take immediate action such as attack or run. Even in today's hectic world, this is a necessary mechanism. It comes in useful when you must respond to a real threat within a split second.

Anxiety is a built-in mechanism to protect us from danger. Interestingly, it is a mechanism that protects but does not harm—an important point that will be elaborated upon later.

The Physical Manifestations of a Panic Attack

Nervousness and Chemical Effects

When confronted with danger, the brain sends signals to a section of the nervous system. It is this system that is responsible for gearing the body up for action and also calms the body down and restores equilibrium. To carry out these two vital functions, the autonomic nervous system has two subsections, the sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic nervous system.

The sympathetic nervous system is the one we tend to know all too much about because it primes our body for action, readies us for the “fight or flight” response, while the parasympathetic nervous system is the one we love dearly as it serves as our restoring system, which returns the body to its normal state.

When either of these systems is activated, they stimulate the whole body, which has an “all or nothing” effect. This explains why when a panic attack occurs, the individual often feels a number of different sensations throughout the body.

The sympathetic system is responsible for releasing the adrenaline from the adrenal glands on the kidneys. These are small glands located just above the kidneys. Less known, however, is that the adrenal glands also release adrenaline, which functions as the body's chemical messengers to keep the activity going. When a panic attack begins, it does not switch off as easily as it is turned on. There is always a period of what would seem increased or continued anxiety, as these messengers travel throughout the body.

After a period of time, the parasympathetic nervous system gets called into action. Its role is to return the body to normal functioning once the perceived danger is gone. The parasympathetic system is the system we all know and love, because it returns us to a calm relaxed state.

When we engage in a coping strategy that we have learned, for example, a relaxation technique, we are in fact willing the parasympathetic nervous system into action. A good thing to remember is that this system will be brought into action at some stage whether we will it or not. The body cannot continue in an ever-increasing spiral of anxiety. It reaches a point where it simply must kick in, relaxing the body. This is one of the many built-in protection systems our bodies have for survival.

You can do your best with worrying thoughts, keeping the sympathetic nervous system going, but eventually it stops. In time, it becomes a little smarter than us, and realizes that there really is no danger. Our bodies are incredibly intelligent—modern science is always discovering amazing patterns of intelligence that run throughout the cells of our body. Our body seems to have infinite ways of dealing with the most complicated array of functions we take for granted. Rest assured that your body's primary goal is to keep you alive and well.

Not so convinced?

Try holding your breath for as long as you can. No matter how strong your mental will is, it can never override the will of the body. This is good news—no matter how hard you try to convince yourself that you are going to die from a panic attack, you won't. Your body will override that fear and search for a state of balance. There has never been a reported incident of someone dying from a panic attack.

Remember this next time you have a panic attack. Your mind may make the sensations continue longer than the body intended, but eventually everything will return to a state of balance. In fact, balance (homeostasis) is what our body continually strives for.

The interference for your body is nothing more than the sensations of doing rigorous exercise. Our body is not alarmed by these symptoms. Why should it be? It knows its own capability. It's our thinking minds that panic, which overreact and scream in sheer terror! We tend to fear the worst and exaggerate our own sensations. A quickened heart beat becomes a heart attack. An overactive mind seems like a close shave with schizophrenia. Is it our fault? Not really—we are simply diagnosing from poor information.

Cardiovascular Effects

Activity in the sympathetic nervous system increases our heartbeat rate, speeds up the blood flow throughout the body, ensures all areas are well supplied with oxygen and that waste products are removed. This happens in order to prime the body for action.

A fascinating feature of the "fight or flight" mechanism is that blood (which is channelled from areas where it is currently not needed by a tightening of the blood vessels) is brought to areas where it is urgently needed.

For example, should there be a physical attack, blood drains from the skin, fingers, and toes so that less blood is lost, and is moved to “active areas” such as the thighs and biceps to help the body prepare for action.

This is why many feel numbness and tingling during a panic attack, often misinterpreted as some serious health risk, such as the precursor to a heart attack. Interestingly, most people who suffer from anxiety often feel they have heart problems. If you are really worried that such is the case with your situation, visit your doctor and have it checked out. At least then you can put your mind at rest.

Respiratory Effects

One of the scariest effects of a panic attack is the fear of suffocating or smothering. It is very common during a panic attack to feel tightness in the chest and throat. I’m sure everyone can relate to some fear of losing control of your breathing. From personal experience, anxiety grows from the fear that your breathing itself would cease and you would be unable to recover. Can a panic attack stop our breathing? No.

A panic attack is associated with an increase in the speed and depth of breathing. This has obvious importance for the defense of the body since the tissues need to get more oxygen to prepare for action. The feelings produced by this increase in breathing, however, can include breathlessness, hyperventilation, sensations of choking or smothering, and even pains or tightness in the chest. The real problem is that these sensations are alien to us, and they feel unnatural.

Having experienced extreme panic attacks myself, I remember that on many occasions, I would have this feeling that I couldn’t trust my body to do the

breathing for me, so I would have to manually take over and tell myself when to breathe in and when to breathe out. Of course, this didn't suit my body's requirement of oxygen and so the sensations would intensify—along with the anxiety. It was only when I employed the technique I will describe for you later, did I let the body continue doing what it does best—running the whole show.

Importantly, a side-effect of increased breathing, (especially if no actual activity occurs) is that the blood supply to the head is actually decreased. While such a decrease is only a small amount and is not at all dangerous, it produces a variety of unpleasant but harmless symptoms that include dizziness, blurred vision, confusion, sense of unreality, and hot flushes.

Other Physical Effects of Panic Attacks

A number of other effects are produced by the activation of the sympathetic nervous system, none of which are in any way harmful. For example, the pupils widen to let in more light, which may result in blurred vision, or "seeing" stars, etc. There is a decrease in salivation, resulting in dry mouth. There is decreased activity in the digestive system, which often produces nausea, a heavy feeling in the stomach, and even constipation. Finally, many of the muscle groups tense up in preparation for "fight or flight" and this results in subjective feelings of tension, sometimes extending to actual aches and pains, as well as trembling and shaking.

Overall, the fight/flight response results in a general activation of the whole bodily metabolism. Thus, one often feels hot and flushed and, because this process takes a lot of energy, the person generally feels tired and drained.

Mental Manifestations

The goal of the fight/flight response is making the individual aware of the potential danger that may be present. Therefore, when activated, the mental

priority is placed upon searching the surroundings for potential threats. In this state one is highly-strung, so to speak. It is very difficult to concentrate on any one activity, as the mind has been trained to seek all potential threats and not to give up until the threat has been identified. As soon as the panic hits, many people look for the quick and easiest exit from their current surroundings, such as by simply leaving the bank queue and walking outside. Sometimes the anxiety can heighten, if we perceive that leaving will cause some sort of social embarrassment.

If you have a panic attack while at the workplace but feel you must press on with whatever task it is you are doing, it is quite understandable that you would find it very hard to concentrate. It is quite common to become agitated and generally restless in such a situation. Many individuals I have worked with who have suffered from panic attacks over the years indicated that artificial light—such as that which comes from computer monitors and televisions screens—can often trigger or worsen a panic attack, particularly if the person is feeling tired or run down. This is worth bearing in mind if you work for long periods of time on a computer. Regular break reminders should be set up on your computer to remind you to get up from the desk and get some fresh air when possible.

In other situations, when during a panic attack an outside threat cannot normally be found, the mind turns inwards and begins to contemplate the possible illness the body or mind could be suffering from. This ranges from thinking it might have been something you ate at lunch, to the possibility of an oncoming cardiac arrest.

The burning question is: Why is the fight/flight response activated during a panic attack even when there is apparently nothing to be frightened of?

Upon closer examination, it would appear that what we are afraid of are the sensations themselves—we are afraid of the body losing control. These unexpected physical symptoms create the fear or panic that something is

terribly wrong. Why do you experience the physical symptoms of the fight/flight response if you are not frightened to begin with? There are many ways these symptoms can manifest themselves, not just through fear. For example, it may be that you have become generally stressed for some reason in your life, and this stress results in an increase in the production of adrenaline and other chemicals, which from time to time, would produce symptoms. This increased adrenaline can be maintained chemically in the body, even after the stress has long gone. Another possibility is diet, which directly affects our level of stress. Excess caffeine, alcohol, or sugar is known for causing stress in the body (Chapter 5 gives a full discussion on diet and its importance).

Unresolved emotions are often pointed to as possible trigger of panic attacks, but it is important to point out that eliminating panic attacks from your life does not necessarily mean analyzing your psyche and digging into your subconscious. The “One Move” technique will teach you to deal with the present moment and defuse the attack along with removing the underlying anxiety that sparks the initial anxiety.

Before moving to the key of this, let's examine some of the common myths and misinterpretations of an anxiety disorder.

Chapter 2

Myths and Misinterpretations

“Am I going crazy?”

It is understandable for anyone to fear they may be going crazy when they suffer from initial panic attacks. There is so little real public awareness of mental disease, so people often jump to extreme conclusions. These conclusions are usually based on misinformation and an overactive imagination.

The most commonly known mental health issue is schizophrenia—even the word itself strikes terror within the average person.

Schizophrenia is a major disorder characterized by such severe symptoms as disjointed thoughts and speech, babbling, having delusions or strange beliefs (for example, sufferers often claim they are receiving messages from an inner voice), and hallucinations. Furthermore, schizophrenia appears to be largely a genetic disorder and run strongly in families.

Schizophrenia generally begins very gradually, and not suddenly (such as during a panic attack). Additionally, because it runs in families, only a certain proportion of people can become schizophrenic, and in other people, no amount of stress will cause the disorder. A third important point is that people who become schizophrenic will usually show some mild symptoms for most of their lives (such as unusual thoughts, flowery speech, etc.). Thus, if this has not been noticed in you yet, then chances are you will not become schizophrenic. This is especially true if you are over 25, since schizophrenia generally first appears in the late teens to early 20's.

Losing Control

During a panic attack, some people are prone to believe they are going to "lose control." This loss of control can be bodily, i.e., that all your vital organs will completely lose the run of themselves and descend into chaos, or that the individual will mentally lose a grip on reality. Often, it is those who hate being socially embarrassed suffer from this fear the most.

Losing control could range from steering your car into an innocent passerby, or picking up a knife and killing the nearest and dearest person to you (not that we all don't think of this from time to time!).

Put your mind at rest! As scary as those thoughts may be, you are not going to commit any of these acts. Relax. The reason you are experiencing them is because your body feels out of control. Your mind feels that if your body is out of control, it is next on the list.

You are not going to lose it. In fact, I am sure that with all the panic attacks you may have experienced in public places, nobody even noticed you looked uncomfortable. We are, by nature, social animals and dread to be seen in some kind of an embarrassing situation. Jumping up from your chair in a business meeting and screaming for an ambulance may go through your mind, but it is unlikely to happen. In the end, even if we do embarrass ourselves socially, does it really matter? We have to learn to be kind to ourselves. So what if we were to cause a scene and great embarrassment? Life is too short to keep up with appearances all the time. In fact, the more honest you are with your fears, the less pressure you are subjecting yourself under.

Passing Out in Public

The core fear of passing out in public is that we suddenly become so vulnerable, especially if we are alone. Who will look after us as we lie strewn across the

sidewalk? We also dread the thought of passing out for fear that we may never wake but fall into a coma. Passing out is caused by a lack of blood to the brain. When we faint, the body falls to the ground and allows blood to be easily supplied to the brain—which is, again, another of the clever safety mechanisms of the body. Quite simply, fainting during a panic attack is highly uncommon due to the amount of blood that is being circulated. Your heart is usually beating fast and there is little worry that the brain would be short of fresh supply. The dizziness often felt during a panic attack is caused by increased respiration, and while it may be confusing for the individual, it is harmless and does not lead to fainting.

Heart Attacks

This really is a minefield and almost anyone who has suffered from panic attacks at some point will fear for the health of their heart. Let us look at the facts of heart disease and see how this differs from panic attacks.

The major symptoms of heart disease are breathlessness and chest pain, as well as occasional palpitations and fainting. Such symptoms are generally related to the amount of physical effort exerted. That is, the harder you exercise, the worse the symptoms, and the less you exercise, the better.

The symptoms will usually go away quickly if the individual rests. This is very different to the symptoms associated with panic attacks. Certainly, panic symptoms can occur during exercise, but they are different to the symptoms of a heart attack as they occur frequently at rest. Of most importance, heart disease will almost always produce major electrical changes in the heart, which are picked up very obviously by an EKG. In panic attacks, the only change that shows up on the EKG is a slight increase in heartbeat rate.

Sometimes, individuals go through a similar worry about their heart as they do with their breathing. People convince themselves that if they worry enough about their heart, or concentrate too much upon its actions, that it may somehow get confused and forget how to beat correctly. It is quite common for people who suffer from panic attacks to regularly check in on their heart at intervals, to make sure it is still beating away.

It is true that, mentally, we can all affect the pattern of our heartbeats. When you concentrate hard you may notice an irregular beat or two. This is nothing to get upset about. Remember that our bodies have an incredible internal intelligence and simply telling your heart out of panic that it might stop does not mean that it takes any heed of our fears. Learn to become more comfortable with your heart, let it do its job. Listen to it when relaxed and also when exercising. The more comfortable you are with the diversity and range of your heartbeats, the more confidence you will have in it when it is exerting itself.

If you are worried about heart problems, treat yourself to an EKG, and put your mind to rest. If you have had an EKG and the doctor has cleared you, you can safely assume you do not have heart problems. Also, if your symptoms occur at any time and not solely upon exertion, this is additional evidence against a heart disorder.

Unreality/Disconnectedness

There is a symptom not often mentioned in panic attack literature (induced by excessive anxiety) that I would like to discuss. It is the sensation of unreality. Many people become distressed by this sensation and feel they may be losing their mind.

People who experience panic attacks report feeling disconnected from their world, or having a sensation of unreality. The sensation is described as if the world has become nothing more than a projection of a film. This sensation is

quite distressing as it often leads to the individual believing that some permanent damage has been done to their brain, causing these sensations. A typical manifestation of this is when the individual may be having a conversation with someone and suddenly feels alarmingly isolated and removed from the situation. Once the sensation arises it can be so impactful that it takes days to leave the eerie feeling behind and stop thinking about it.

I mention this because the condition is not often spoken about, and to reassure those of you who may have experienced this sensation, that it is only a side-effect of excessive anxiety and will pass as soon as the body learns to relax. Once the body returns to normal and has the opportunity to dispel some excess chemicals produced by the adrenal glands, then this unusual sensation will dissipate. Give it time, and these feelings will subside as you move from a life of anxiety to a more tranquil one.

We have looked at the common characteristics of panic attacks. Now, let's look at how we can defuse the panic.

Chapter 3

The “One Move”

We are all aware of how terrifying a panic attack can feel. Our minds race with the possibility of a mind and body out of control. We put to use every coping mechanism we have, and when they fail, we feel vulnerable and alone with a myriad of confusing bodily sensations and terrifying thoughts.

Let me share with you my insight into panic attacks that turned my life around—from a life of fear into one of courage and true confidence. The technique is subtle and yet I want you to give it careful consideration, as it has not only completely eliminated panic attacks from my life but also the lives of many long-term sufferers. It differs from every other treatment of anxiety disorder that I have come across, in that it tackles the very core of anxiety and panic attacks.

The traditional approach to dealing with anxiety disorders is flawed. People are continuously taught to cope in order to “beat” their anxiety. Coping techniques are numerous and prescribed or taught like “weapons” to overcome the dangerous assailant that is the “panic attack.” Even the term “panic attack” is suggestive of battle and conflict. Panic attacks are described as the outside force that wants to see its sufferers defeated and left feeling isolated. The real truth of the matter is that there is no real attack nor is there an attacker. Panic attacks are not threatening or dangerous; they are an awareness of a series of heightened bodily sensations. But where does the true answer to a panic-free life lie? Does it lie in a continuous battle to thwart the advance of anxiety, or must the sufferer be resigned to always live with a condition that will plague them their whole lives?

The answer was discovered by observing nature. Nature is a great teacher—watch how it deals with opposing forces. The tree bends with the wind, the river flows around the rock, summer gives way to fall. Nature never struggles, never

resists, everything flows with an innate acceptance, and therein lies the key to dealing with panic attacks.

Our primordial instincts tell us to pull away, and guard ourselves from fear. We either fight it with our best coping technique or simply close down and run to a safe refuge. All of these actions create an internal struggle. Like a tug-of-war in the case of a panic attack, we pull and push against the oncoming anxiety with all the resistance we can muster we try and cope/deal with the situation resulting in even further inner stress, fear, and conflict.

We think nervously, "What if I lose this fight?" "What will happen if anxiety wins over me? Will I be hospitalized, or worse, go insane?" As we wrestle with these thoughts, we tighten our mental grip, and pull away from the threat by attempting to suppress the sensations. We may swallow relaxant medication, begin a series of coping exercises, or even drink some alcohol in order to suppress the terrifying feelings that are coursing through our body.

Sometimes, when we are lucky, we are in a good fighting condition and the fear appears to subside. Other times, we lose outrightly and experience full-blown panic attacks as the fear engulfs our emotions and leaves us feeling vulnerable and fearful. Whichever way it transpires, we are always left with one lasting recurring thought: "When will this strike again? When will I have to do battle with this terror again?"

As soon as the telltale signals of a panic attack appear, such as the quickening of breath or the increased heart rate, we immediately jump to try curtail and control the sensations in the hope of enforcing a state of relative tranquillity. Those who suffer from regular panic attacks often mention that their predominant fear is that of losing control of the body or of the mind. We attempt our best to control the situation and by doing so we do not allow our bodies to flow in the heightened bodily functions caused by the fight or flight response. We close down and tighten up our muscles as though we were preparing for a

psychological collision. This preparation for collision is similar to what our body does for a real-world physical collision such as a car crash.

Using a simple car crash analogy, we perceive the imminent danger ahead on the road and we respond with automatic reflexes as adrenaline is released into the bloodstream and apply whichever evasive maneuvers we can in order to avoid the very real threat of a physical impact. The key difference with a panic attack is that there is no real threat. Instead of a quick burst of anxiety that would normally dissipate once the threat is over, a person suffering from panic attacks plays the perceived threat over and over in slow motion, leading to a prolonged state of heightened anxiety.

Before I introduce you to the “One Move” technique, it is important to understand: There is never a damaging psychological or physical collision during a panic attack. It may seem like there is a real and present threat, like the example of a car crash. Remind yourself of all the previous times you have emerged unscathed from panic attacks. Think of all the panic attacks you have experienced and how you have always come out on the other side—possibly petrified, but nevertheless alive and undamaged with no harm done to your body except for possible fatigue. The real issue here that causes most of the upset and understandable distress is the fear of damage that a panic attack is supposed to cause.

So where does this leave us? The first clue to successful recovery lies in our ability to run with a panic attack, to fully engage the experience. To use a cliché, we need to “flow with it” by becoming the observer of fear and anxiety, not the victim.

The fear and panic experienced during high anxiety is a result of the individual reacting to their emotions and identifying with the warning of an “attack,”

believing in a real imminent physical or psychological threat. So the first key in understanding is that there is no panic if there is no perceived threat.

Do you realize there is a big similarity between a panic attack and a roller coaster ride? Both are exhilarating experiences that excite our nervous system and increase our bodily awareness. The roller coaster, however, does not send the same level of panic through us, as we are fully aware that it is not life-threatening and will shortly come to a safe stop. This is the same attitude we need to adopt towards panic attacks. It is only our interpretation that differs. We are looking to change our interpretation.

What does that mean in practical terms? It means if you embrace the fear and let the emotions and sensations run freely through you, rather than close down in the face of an imminent panic attack, your fear immediately subsides. The sensations that usually terrify you become exactly that, sensations, and nothing more, such as sweating palms, dizziness, palpitations, shortness of breath, etc. Uncomfortable sensations you could do without but the key difference with this approach is that the sensations do not lead to a panic attack.

It is not that you will never feel anxious at times; a certain level of anxiety is part of everyday living. What is different is that your occasional anxiety is not developing into a higher anxiety experience. The occasional feeling of anxiety is fine and is experienced by everyone. Your new response is putting you in synch with all those people who never get panic attacks because their feelings do not develop into an exaggerated sense of irrational fear.

So where do we begin? Because there is no danger, there is no real threat. This simple but true understanding combined with the “One Move” technique outlined below will be the tool with which you will learn to defuse panic attacks in seconds!

So let's look at the first step in defusing a panic attack.

- Embrace and accept the fear so the emotions can run freely and dissipate, rather than becoming locked in a vicious cycle of recurring anxiety.

In other words, observe and do not react.

The initial spark of anxiety that triggers a panic attack stems from a struggle within us that is usually at a deeper subconscious level. What caused that initial struggle is irrelevant, as it is as varied as those who suffer from panic attacks and is not necessary to be aware of in order to eliminate panic attacks. By all means visit a psychoanalyst and discover the root of the anxiety, but be aware that this will only give you an awareness of the original trigger and not necessarily result in the curing of your condition. What we are looking for is a conscious recognition of the panic attack, and a new and empowered response to them when they arise. A response that will defuse the panic attack in its tracks and clear the pattern of recurring attacks.

During the initial moments of a panic attack, you will notice some familiar patterns. For many, it may simply be a feeling of unease or tightness in the stomach, a shortness of breath, or tightness of chest. The symptoms usually begin on a very subtle level, sometimes hours or days before the actual attack depending on the situation.

When you feel the initial sensations that usually accompany a panic attack, stop what you are doing and, if possible, find yourself a comfortable place to be alone. This time, however, you are not setting the scene to do battle as before—this time you are preparing a space—an accepting space to invite and welcome the fear and anxiety.

Embrace the fear as it rises within you. Mentally send it a short message telling it that you are glad it has come to visit, you are sending it a warm welcome. Send a message that you are inviting this feeling into your body and mind. Treat

it like an old friend who's coming to visit. You are welcoming it closer because you want to get to know and observe it. It is not unusual to be feeling a little apprehensive at this point, as this new approach may feel unusual—inviting the anxiety closer. You are actually inviting and greeting the panic that normally upsets and terrifies you.

- Be firm. Just watch as the feeling of fear rises and draws nearer.

If you are a visual type, you might want to give the anxiety a mental image such as a troublesome child or ridiculous cartoon character.

Let the fear wash over you. Feel each and every sensation in detail. We are not trying to get away from the panic attack this time—in fact, we are actually trying to fully embrace it.

Keep with the sensations, and watching them like you would with an ocean wave as they fall and rise again throughout your body. The approximate timeframe of each individual panic attack is about twenty minutes.

There will come a point where you can observe and experience to a point, and then it will overwhelm you, you will either want to fight it or retreat to safety. This is understandable as the sensations can often be very uncomfortable. However, this is the vital point in the process. It signals the moment to use the technique that has made all the difference in my life—the “One Move.” At this key moment, when you feel all is lost and you could not continue observing and experiencing the strong sensations, identify the source of your anxiety and demand for more.

MORE?

You're thinking, “You must be kidding!”, “I could hardly stand this, let alone take an increased dosage.”

Demand more! Scream out if you must, but let your anxiety know you are making a firm request that you want to experience the very worst it can throw at you! The request for more is the most empowering statement you make when in the midst of a full-blown panic attack. It sends a clear and strong statement that behind it all you were calling fears bluff, you are still really in control and always have been. You were just observing up until this moment. Like the roller coaster ride you were allowing yourself to feel the experience, the sensations of fear. You were a fully paid-up and willing participant, not a victim. Now you are consciously moving towards the fear, requesting that it shows you more of these unusual bodily sensations you are going through.

Here are some mantra you may use:

"I feel anxious but now show me how it feels like to be really, really anxious."

"Show me how it feels like if my throat and chest feel even tighter."

"I can feel a real knot in my stomach but I wonder what it would be like if it were much tighter, can't you make it tighter? Is that the most you can offer?"

"I notice all kinds of fearful thoughts circling round my mind -make them faster, aren't there any more scary ones?"

This request for more is a request fear cannot deliver. You are voluntarily moving in the same direction of the sensations and giving the fear no momentum to pull on to create the mental struggle and anxiety. This knocks anxiety right on the head as there is no longer any fuel to drive the campaign of terror. The fuse that was dangerously close to exploding into a full-blown panic attack is extinguished. What is more is that this action calls fears bluff, in that the fear driving the whole experience reveals the truth of the situation—there never really was anything to fear in the first place. The threat was a hoax. The panic attack was a dud, there never was a real tangible threat.

Your fear has no option but to retreat. You are allowing it no room to manoeuvre.

It can help to demand more in an aggressive manner. The sensations, of course, are unpleasant and nobody is trying to pretend they are enjoyable—but that does not have to stop you from fully experiencing them. In fact, you have always fully experienced them but this time you are a willing participant. What you are doing is stating with confidence to yourself and your body that you are capable of experiencing these and any amount of increased anxiety that may come your way because you know the truth. There is nothing to fear.

Insist on more.

Fear does not know how to handle this request; it is completely confused by this new response, it has no option but to collapse in on itself and dissipate. Fear feeds off fear; you are extinguishing the fuel on which a panic attack is driven. It now has no struggle, nothing to feed on. For extra measure (as the fear wanes), silently say to your fear, “Is that the best you can do?” Invite it to come back! “Stay, have you nothing else to terrify me with?” As it leaves—which it will—wish it well as it leaves your body and again keep the invitation open for its return. You need to be welcoming of the anxiety to return in order to eliminate lingering thoughts of an unexpected return.

When done correctly, the results of this technique are instantaneous. You will immediately feel the turning point and the parasympathetic nervous system, which we spoke of earlier, coming into action and restoring calm. It is like you have walked out the other side of fear with a new confidence. There was no abyss, no cliff you went tumbling off. All of it was nothing but a series of physical sensations.

You may notice the fear trying to make a comeback, i.e., something terrifying, like a fearful thought crossing your mind. Don't worry. This is just the winding down cycle of the anxiety. Don't let it engage you. Observe it as before, like looking at a cloud passing overhead in the sky, and let it go. Remember, observe and don't react. Remain firm and continue to observe your mind and body. Rest in the knowledge that whatever comes your way, you can handle it. Let that be your daily mantra.

"I can handle any situation life throws my way."

In the beginning you will probably find it hard to believe in yourself to demand more as panic attacks may have eroded some of your self-confidence. This is only natural—you may find yourself asking for more and then immediately running with your hands in the air. Don't let any setback worry you. Practice and practice. If you do not get a result straight away, keep at it; the more you use this technique, the more you will see how empowering it is. In time, you will reach a point where you feel a panic attack approach, and will genuinely welcome it with all your mind and body. You will truly understand that there is nothing to worry about. You will mentally shout out to your anxiety to come in—but by then, it would not. Have you ever noticed that when you are feeling relaxed you cannot make yourself have a panic attack no matter how hard you try? Nor can you force yourself to be wildly ecstatic or terribly gloomy. No matter how hard you force it, you cannot make your body have a panic attack. Now you know the reason why. Moving towards fear eliminates the source of its power.

You may probably be thinking, "No way! I'm not asking for more panic sensations, knowing my luck, that's exactly what I'll get, and it will finally push me over the edge and finish me off." You fear that if you do in fact ask for more fear, more anxiety, that the request will antagonize and create more problems for you.

Trust yourself. Trust in your own body's ability to handle the situation. Apply what you have read here, practise it; it will be your most useful ally in your scariest moments.

Let's take an example and put this into practice.

You are on a train and have just sat down. It has been a long day; you are tired, and are looking forward to sleeping on the journey. The whistle blows and the train doors slam shut with a loud bang. An anxious thought flashes through your mind.

"What if I get a panic attack on this train? How will I cope? I won't be able to get off!"

It begins. Your chest suddenly feels tight; you notice your heartbeat increasing. You quickly look around. Any friendly faces you may be consoled by? None. The initial symptoms of a panic attack begin. So here we go, let's look first at the way you may have been dealing with it in the past:

As your heartbeat increases, you become edgy. You may have learned some breathing techniques, so you put them into effect. One of the problems with breathing techniques, although useful, is that the results never seem quick or apparent enough, so therefore are rarely carried through and continued. Many people don't like to focus on their breathing as they feel this only causes a sense of smothering and increased anxiety.

So the breathing doesn't seem to be working. Most likely, your next move is to get up and walk around. Into the toilet, for example, where you can be alone. Standing up, and walking around makes you feel less trapped. You close the toilet door and sit on the seat.

This feels a little better. It is good to be alone—away from anyone who might witness you in distress and making a fool of yourself. The problem is that you are starting to feel trapped again and you are running out of places to run to. You reach inside your pocket and pull out your emergency relaxant for panic attacks. It may not necessarily have to be a pharmaceutical relaxant; maybe a small bottle of alcohol or even rosary beads. Whatever your last line of defense is, it should better work. If not, you will have to use the ultimate coping strategy—pull the emergency cord and jump off the train. This situation, like most panic attacks, is one of an escalation of panic, and an exhaustion of the coping techniques.

Now, let's try the same scenario with the new understanding:

As you hear the train door slam, the fearful thoughts rise—this time, you don't react with terror, but with simple observation—maybe even slight excitement as you are going to be presented with a new opportunity to learn more about your panic attacks.

I am not saying you are not going to experience fear—that's sometimes unavoidable. But the difference is that whatever you are going to experience, you are going to throw yourself into it—head first. You're a survivor.

Your heart is pounding faster now, and you notice your breathing is becoming short and rapid. You decide to keep feeling all of this—one hundred percent. A thought creeps in, and tells you to get up, move around, go to the bathroom. You decide not to. You tell yourself that if it gets really intense, then you might consider it as a last option. But for the moment, you are going to ride it out where you are.

You are now in the moment of a panic attack. You are now listening to your fearful thoughts and merely experiencing all the unusual bodily sensations. You are pleased with yourself. You realize you are riding the wave of anxiety, and

haven't even begun your first coping technique. Then it intensifies. You start to feel intense fear in your stomach, as your left arm vibrates with pins and needles. You are approaching the climax of high anxiety. You examine all your options—shout out, escape, or invite more. So that's what you do—you ask for more. In fact, you demand with firmness that the panic increases so you experience the full range of the emotion. A few seconds pass. It hasn't intensified so you ask for it again—and once again, nothing. In fact, things are starting to calm down. Your heart isn't racing like before, and your chest feels somewhat lighter. It's coming to an end. Now, you can really feel confident! Not only did you get through a panic attack, but you also ran with it, and experienced it all the way. You stood your ground not in an overly aggressive manner but as an explorer, looking to feel the full range of your experiences. There is no lingering fear of a returning panic attack on your train journey, because you are confident that should one come, you will ride it out like the last. You close your eyes, and relax confidently into your seat.

What you are doing is befriending fear in a nonconfrontational manner. You are inviting it into your life, making it yours. Owning it.

This is a complete U-turn on what has been previously taught. We are normally told to cope using coping techniques, and after a significant period of time, you grow out of your anxiety. Bypass that disempowering approach. Go for the finish line. Try the complete reverse—befriend your fear, and then watch over a short period of time as your anxiety loosens its grip.

This is by no means a new technique. We can see from the past how this was applied to many different areas of living a successful life.

The ancient Chinese martial arts such as aikido use this approach to self-defense. When faced with an attacker, initiates of these defense schools were taught that the greatest defense was never to engage in the first place. Simply observe and walk away. Should an attack ensue after the path of non-resistance

had been tried, the initiates were taught moves such as hand blocks to channel the energy of the aggressor in a harmless way, and let it run its course. Eventually, the aggressor (after finding him/herself flat on the ground one too many times) backs off and retreats. The aggressor becomes harmless. The danger is disarmed.

I describe fear simplistically—like an external force, an aggressor that pays you a visit. The truth is that it is all our own creation—a game we play with ourselves. The fear is an overreaction to bodily sensations. I want to highlight the fact that this is not just a process of simply observing anxiety or, to use a popular term, “floating” with the anxiety. The method of accepting and observing has been written about in other cognitive approaches to dealing with anxiety, but that only makes up the first step of the One Move technique.

In itself, observation is nowhere near powerful enough to stop the attack in its tracks. Simply observing is like sitting immobile on the fence. It is the stance of neutrality, but you may have noticed in the past that being neutral towards the anxiety is not often enough. To really eliminate panic attacks for good, you need an additional element. You need movement. That movement is internal and towards the anxiety and panic attack. Asking for more is such a movement. Because of its simplistic nature, it is a concept that is often dismissed or overlooked by medical professionals.

Do not be confused by the academic jargon used to explain your anxiety disorders. What psychologists and doctors do not explain to you is that the mechanism of anxiety is not a complex issue. Yes, the issues in your life or the chemical reactions in your body that bring about the initial anxiety may be complex, but being able to understand and then defuse the mechanism of anxiety is not a complex process. 33 Steps to Be Anxiety Free is not a solution. It is simply an elaborate list of coping skills. You only need one step, one

movement towards the core of the anxiety. That switch in thinking will get you the results you are looking for.

Remember, the anxiety is not logical. Look at the fears that go through your mind; they have no basis for validity, nor do they follow reason or structure. Panic attacks are flat out illogical; they do not make sense. There is no threat, and yet you still fear the sensations. What you need is an equally illogical solution. In this case, that means doing the opposite of what the logical mind has tried to do all along by fighting the anxiety. You need to implement the One Move.

To summarize, the steps discussed are as follows:

1. When panic arises wherever you may be, simply start to observe it. Do not try and avoid or suppress the bodily sensations.
2. Participate as much as possible in the experience, feel all the sensations as they course through your body. Do not label the sensations as good or bad.
3. When the panic feels it is going to run out of control and your confidence in your ability to observe the fear wanes, perform the "One Move" by inviting your body to experience more. Demand more of the unusual sensations.
4. Stay with it. Repeat the process; keep moving toward the fear by asking for more. Within a short period of time your body will return to normal.

What happens chemically when you have a panic attack, is that you think a thought that says 'you are in extreme danger'. That thought fires your synaptic pathways and launches the fight or flight response. The original thought that launches the entire process comes from the unusual bodily sensations we talked about earlier. What causes this initial sensation is as varied as the people who experience them. For some it is unresolved emotional issues, for others it is diet or bodily changes. The causes or origin of the sensations is not what concerns us right now; it is our reaction to these sensations that causes the anxiety and panic.

So the thought fires in your mind that this is something out of your control. That something really bad is about to happen and you may suffer some terrible damage or even the most irreparable damage of all -death. These fearful thoughts spark the fuse of the imminent panic attack.

-You defuse that threat immediately by disempowering those fearful thoughts.

-You disempower those fearful thoughts by using the One Move. Wrap your whole mind around the technique and really go for it.

The key difference between someone who is cured of panic attacks and those that are not is really very simple. They are not afraid of panic attacks. They see the bodily sensations as sensations and not something to overreact to. I am showing you how to be one of those people.

Here is another interesting way of looking at the One Move technique:

The trick to ending panic and anxiety attacks is to want to have one.- the wanting pushes it away. Can you have a panic attack in this very second? Try hard, I bet you can't.

You have heard the saying 'what you resist persists'. Well that saying applies perfectly to fear. If you resist a situation or experience out of fear, the fear around that issue will persist. How do you stop resisting– you move directly into its path, by doing so it cannot persist. In essence what that means is that if you daily voluntarily seek out a panic attack you cannot have one. You may not realise it but you have always decided to panic. You make the choice by thinking 'this is beyond my control', 'something terrible is about to happen'.

To use a visual analogy; imagine having a panic attack is like standing on a cliff edge. The anxiety it seems is pushing you closer to falling over the edge. Each unusual sensation confirms that something terrible is about to happen and you feel yourself being edged closer and closer to the abyss. There are two options open to you in this scenario.

1. You can turn around and fight your way back to safe ground by using coping techniques and strategies you have learnt previously. You might seek reassurance from a friend or take a dose of medication to help you feel safer. Basically you fight it.
2. or two. You use my technique. You bravely jump!

To be really free of the fear you must metaphorically jump. You must jump off the cliff edge that scares you so much and into all the things that you fear most.

How do you jump – You jump by inviting more of the fear.

Your guaranteed safety is the fact that a panic attack will never harm you. That is medical fact. You are safe, the sensations are wild but no harm will come to you. Your heart is racing but no harm will come to you. The jump

becomes nothing more than a two-foot drop! You have all the safety harnesses you need, in that you never have had anything to fear in the first place. The abyss that lay before you was an illusion.

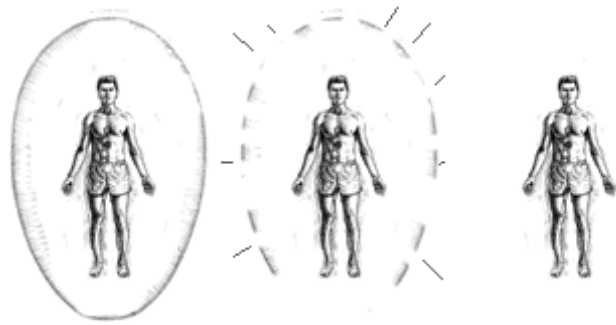
Trust that medical knowledge, feel assured by that- think of all the attacks you have had to date and come out the other end.

So now you are going to treat each and every anxious situation differently. You regularly seek out the panic attack like an adventure seeker. This seeking out the anxiety applies to when you feel yourself bang in the middle of an anxiety episode but it also helps to do it when you feeling fine and relaxed.

Begin right now and for the rest of the day. Go out actually hoping you will have a panic attack! Sounds a bit mad but try it. Feel how empowering that new thinking is for you. Up until now you have dreaded its arrival but now you are chasing it. The fear has nowhere to hide once the tables are turned.

I want you to think of anxiety, as a bubble that surrounds us. When we are in that bubble of fear, our perception of things change and we feel our world getting smaller. We feel quite literally disconnected from the world around us as we look out at it through this bubble of fear. The bubble of fear distorts everyday scenarios. For some, something as simple as going shopping can become terrifying experiences.

Using the “One Move” as described above is very effective because it is like taking a pin and bursting the bubble. Pop!—It bursts the illusion of a real threat. The pin in this imagined scenario is the will or desire to challenge the panic attack, demanding more, calling its bluff. It is the confidence you have deep within yourself that moves you outwards past the bubble of fear and towards life.



Panic Away, you are in the safest of hands!

Chapter 4

In this chapter, I want to give you some examples of how the One Move can be applied to various real life situations. You may have a specific situation that causes you panic and are unsure how the technique can be applied appropriately. Hopefully, this chapter will clarify such issues.

Driving With Anxiety

One of the more common questions I am asked is how to apply the One Move technique to cope with anxiety while driving. Ranging from fear of being caught in traffic to crossing waterway bridges, people have many different fears in this area. Often the anxiety stems from a fear of being trapped in the vehicle in gridlock traffic or losing control of the vehicle and causing a collision.

Needless to say, even though they may have been battling with a driving phobia for many years, almost all of the people I have consulted with have not had their fears of a mishap occur. Let's look at the primary fear, that of having an accident due to the distractions of an anxiety attack while driving.

Most people will work themselves into a state of high anxiety even before they have pulled out of their driveway with imagined scenes of causing ten car collisions on the highway because they "freaked out" and collided with another vehicle. If you have such concerns, the first important thing to begin with is a review of your driving history. Have you been a reckless driver in the past? Have you a history of bad driving? Most phobic drivers in fact have clean driving records and have never even been in a minor road incident. Anxious drivers are not a deadly hazard on the road; in fact, they

can be a lot more vigilant than many ordinary drivers who after a long day in the office are virtually asleep at the wheel.

As we discussed previously when looking at the biology of anxiety, by virtue of his or her condition, an anxious driver has a high level of sensory alertness. This level of alertness keeps the driver aware of any potential hazards and focused on the task of driving, not daydreaming, chatting, or rooting around in the glove compartment. This of course is not to suggest that anxious driving is the ideal way to commute, but I believe it is important to make this point because so many chastise themselves for being anxious in their cars. If you are generally a good driver, then before you set out in your car take confidence in that and reaffirm that fact to yourself. Acknowledging and reaffirming that you are a capable driver will go some way toward alleviating this concern. That self assurance, along with the "One Move technique for drivers" (below) will help you return to being the confident driver you once were.

The second major concern of most phobic drivers is the fear of being trapped in the car in some manner. By this I mean, being caught in traffic, on busy three-laned motorways, on long bridges, or even stopping at red lights. When allowed to, the mind will run away with this fear and will imagine all kinds of deadly scenarios where you might feel cornered or trapped in your vehicle with no assistance available should you experience a major panic attack.

The important thing here is to curb these fears before they take root by offering yourself viable solutions to any of these scenarios and not letting your mind trick you into believing there is a trap ahead. Give it some thought. Is there really any situation, such as the ones described above, where you truly are trapped with no means of escape?

No, of course there isn't.

Eventually, traffic always moves; it does not remain grid locked forever. There is flow, and there is always an exit. This may mean having to figure the exit out for yourself, but never let these thoughts corner you into thinking that there is no escape. When you counteract these fears with logical solutions, you undermine the control that fear holds over you. You begin to see the bluff it is playing to keep you petrified of what could potentially happen out there in the traffic.

Your mind may rebel and come up with the worst possible scenario you may get “stuck in,” but again, is this really the terrifying trap you imagine it to be? Be careful not to let these thoughts trap your thinking. Every minute of the day, people’s cars break down in traffic. These drivers have no option but to put on the hazard lights and leave the vehicle. It’s not going anywhere. There you are, that is an exit, albeit an extreme one; however, by using my technique, it never needs to come to that. In fact, you are going to learn how driving can actually be an enjoyable experience once again.

The One Move for Drivers

I am going to show how to apply the One Move to driving scenarios. In this case, we are looking to defuse the panic attack while driving a car. When driving a car, it is exactly the same procedure of using the One Move as described in the previous chapter except there is a degree of caution that is needed. I will explain.

What I suggest is that you begin by taking the car out on practice run, possibly at night or on a Sunday when there is less traffic. Drive a route that you feel anxious about; this may be going beyond your safety zone or

driving over a bridge. If you feel very nervous, begin with a smaller test. The important thing though is to challenge yourself with a route that causes you at least some degree of concern. You will not be long into the journey before the anxiety starts to manifest itself. This anxiety may be low level, but if driving really is a problem, it will gradually manifest itself into feelings of panic.

As you feel that panic arise, begin by encouraging the sensations. Feel how anxious your body feels. Get interested in the unusual sensations throughout your body and begin to forcefully encourage the attacks to increase in strength. You are now challenging the anxiety to reveal itself. Move into the anxiety as much as possible.

Your training is to take the car out on a test run in the hope to have an anxiety attack. That is your goal. Even before you have left home, you are chasing the anxiety by purposely setting out on the journey. This is a turn of events because, as it makes you feel anxious, you normally prefer not to even think about driving.

The practice drives can be done with another person to begin with, but after more practice I recommend doing it alone as that is where true independence and freedom from the fear is found. If you always practice with another individual, then you may form an idea that it is your co-passenger that is letting you feel safe and not your new-found confidence.

There are certain things you need to be cautious about while practicing. Ensure you are driving at safe speed and continue to maintain focus on the road and other traffic. If you feel light headed and faint, it is best to pull over and continue with the One Move in a parked position; otherwise, you are perfectly safe. You are safe because you are actually in a heightened state of awareness, and if you maintain a safe speed, you are no danger to yourself or other traffic. You are safe because the unusual sensations are

nothing more than that, "sensations"; they will cause you no harm. The thoughts in your mind that terrify you are mere illusions.

When you return home after a successful drive, it can help to keep track of your performance in a diary; call it your driving diary. This helps reaffirm how well you are progressing, and should you have a bad day on the road, you will be able to return to the diary and see that you are indeed making real progress. Try to affirm to yourself how well you have been doing. We can have one great week and then one bad day, and suddenly it is as if the other six good days never existed! So always try to focus on the success, and it will grow and expand in your life. This applies to all situations where you are trying to overcome your anxiety.

The One Move will give you the ability to move into the fear of any road situation. Moving towards the fear cancels out the force or impact of the anxiety. This takes a little practice, but as I say, a few test runs during times of little traffic is best.

To finish, I want to give you some affirmations you can use while out driving. These can be repeated silently or out loud and will help relax and center your mind, keeping you focused on driving well.

"I am a competent driver and always arrive at my destination safely."

"I am calm, alert, and in full control while driving."

Case Study

Lindsey's Fear of Driving

"My fear of driving was crippling my life. Driving on busy roads, especially highways, would send me frequently into panic attacks. It would begin with a niggling thought usually about some road horror story I had heard recently. Then my body would respond with the rapid heartbeats, the shallow breathing, the whole shooting match. The very fact that my body was getting nervous would then trigger the fear that I was going to have one of my infamous panic attacks. It was not uncommon for me to have to call my husband at times and have him come rescue me!

"Giving up driving was not possible. I have children to take to school every weekday, and there really is no other way to get them there but for me to drive them. I'm sure they would have loved it if I turned around to them and said, 'Sorry, kids, no school today; your mother is too afraid to take you.' But that, of course, was not an option. Every morning I would do battle with this demon fear, and often it felt like I was losing ground. It was draining me and causing numerous sleepless nights as I thought about where I might have to drive the following day.

"There are two ways to get to the school. One is on the highway, or [there is] the other, a much longer, roundabout route that really is a complete waste of time. Depending on how I was feeling, I would either leave extra early for the long route, if I was feeling a bit jittery, or around the normal time as most other mothers in the neighbourhood, if I was feeling brave. It even got to the point where my children were noticing.

'Long way today; mummy mustn't be feeling great.'

"Something had to be done. I began researching on the Internet and came across the Panic Away program. It took me a little while to fully grasp what

was being taught by the One Move technique, and I really had no idea how I was going to apply it to my school runs. But after a few readings, something must have clicked. I think it began with me losing my temper with this demon fear. I actually, embarrassingly enough, yelled out, 'Bring it on' like they do in the movies. 'If you are going to terrorize me for the rest of my driving life, then come on and do your worst'

"That felt really scary and surprisingly invigorating, like I was getting a weight off my chest. I left the next morning with the same attitude. And for the first time in years, I found myself driving up the road with a sense of calm resignation. When I examine it now, it was resignation to the fact that if I had the 'big bad' panic attack I always feared, I would simply have it! 'This thing is not going to kill me, so if you're not going to kill me, then by heck you'd better let me take the kids to school and let me get on with all the other things I have to do today.' This train of thought later developed into 'If this thing isn't going to kill me then it damn well better be gone rather than my having to live under its thumb for the rest of my days.'

"Wow, what a turnabout! Something inside really had clicked. Yes, I felt the same tingles and the same strange palpitations for weeks after, but now I really didn't care. My attitude did a complete U-turn from being terrified by the slightest sensation to not giving a breeze. It is almost like I got sick and tired of the tantrum of the panic attacks and was not going to tolerate the fears anymore. I am not sure if this is the right interpretation of the One Move, but this is what I took from it, and it really works for me.

"I now drive with confidence and with only a distant memory of being scared. I'm not going to say it's totally stress free, the noise, the traffic, etc., but I guess that just means I am back to the same level with every other driver out there on the road."

Fear of Leaving Home

There is phobia that is linked to the experience of panic attacks, and that is agoraphobia. Agoraphobia is the fear of open spaces or of being in crowded, public places such as shopping markets. It is a fear associated with leaving a safe zone, such as the home.

Because of a feeling of being vulnerable, people who experience this fear often suffer from panic attacks in these “open” situations. It is true to say many people who have regular panic attacks experience different degrees of agoraphobia. Some have a lingering background anxiety about being away from home should they experience a panic attack. Other people are so immobilized by this fear that they find it very difficult to leave their home for even a short period.

The thinking behind agoraphobia usually follows the line that were a panic attack to occur, who would look after the person, how would he or she get the assistance and reassurance they needed? The vulnerability grows from the feeling that once victims of agoraphobia are caught in the anxiety, they are suddenly unable to look after themselves and are therefore at the mercy of the place they find themselves in and the strangers around them. In its extreme form, agoraphobia can lead to a situation where people become housebound for numerous years. Please note, this is by no means a hopeless situation, and I always need to reinforce the fact that something only becomes hopeless once the person really believes that to be the case. The One Move has taken many people out of extreme agoraphobia and into a full and active life again.

To begin with, the primary issue that needs to be addressed is the belief in the safe zone. To clarify, when I talk about safe zone, I am referring to the

zone where the person believes panic attacks do not occur, or at least occur infrequently. As comfort is found there, it is where the person tends to spend more and more time. The safe zone of anxiety is a myth sustained by the mind. The mind has developed a habit of thinking that dictates that being inside the safe zone is the only place to feel secure.

If agoraphobia is an issue for you, watch as your mind comes up with reasons why it believes only a certain area is safe and another is not. Those reasons range from being near the phone or people you trust to having familiar physical surroundings to reassure you.

The reality of anxiety is that there is no such thing as a safe zone. There is nothing life threatening about a panic attack, and therefore sitting at home is the same as sitting under the stars on a desert island. Of course, your mind will immediately rush to tell you that a desert island is a ridiculous place to be as there are no hospitals, no tranquillisers, no doctors, NO SAFETY.

You need to review your previous experiences of panic attacks. Aren't you still here, alive and well, after all those attacks during which you were convinced you were going to die?

It may be that on occasions you have been driven to the hospital where they did medicate you to calm you down, but do you really believe that you would not have survived were it not for the drugs? You would have. If the same bout of anxiety had occurred on this desert island, it too would have passed, even if you were all alone. Yes, when it comes to conditions that need medical attention such as asthma, diabetes, and a whole litany of other conditions, then having medical aid nearby is a big asset, but no doctor in the world would tell someone with anxiety that there are only specific safe zones in which she or he can move.

As I know more than anyone how terrifying it can feel to move out of your safe zone as the feeling of fear is welling up inside, I do not wish to sound harsh. This course is not about chastising people for their behaviours. It is way of looking together at solutions and seeing through the myths that form prison walls. The goal is to enable you to return to a richer and more meaningful life. I also realize that people around you cannot understand why a trip to shops would cause you such discomfort. You will have to forgive them and try not to be upset by their lack of understanding of your problem.

If an individual such as a partner or family member has not had a similar anxiety issue, that person may often find it hard to understand and empathize with what you are going through. I am sure you have been dragged out of the house numerous times against your will, kicking and screaming. This can then lead to tensions and arguments and is upsetting as it can make you feel less understood by those around you. People around agoraphobics are often simply trying what they feel is best. If you can see that their intentions are well meaning (although often misguided), then you will be able to relate to them better and help sooth any potential conflicts.

There is one thing I am sure you will agree with, and that is that the only person that will get you out of agoraphobic thinking is yourself. These are your thoughts, and only you can begin to change that pattern. Dealing with long term agoraphobia is a slow process to begin with, but once the results start happening, it moves faster and faster until you reach a point where you will find it hard to believe that going out was such a difficult task.

Agoraphobic Case Study

Sylvia's One Move

"My use of the One Move was really quite simple. I see the technique as a move out of a life of restriction into one of freedom and confidence. I was housebound for five years. I could function to a certain level because I had a husband and children to do things for me, but inside I was really dying. I was angry with myself for not being brave, and I felt trapped by a phobia that would last me to the end of my days. It is quite depressing, really, when you cannot see a solution.

"My problem stemmed from a general anxiety that spiralled into a fear of being caught outside by a panic attack. This meant being anywhere outside home made me extremely anxious. Even walking to the end of the road could be a problem.

"I am not sure how this phobia got so bad, but it wasn't until I reached rock bottom that I decided I had to stop living this way. My marriage was suffering, and I am not sure how much longer it would have lasted had I not tackled the agoraphobia myself. I needed a solution.

"My husband had been very supportive, but I knew he mourned the loss of the confident woman he married years ago. When I look back now, I see I was living an empty shell of a life. I had made myself a prisoner, not of my house but of my mind. My thoughts were the prison wardens threatening me that were I to attempt to break out, I would suffer the consequences. Turns out that after the breakout the consequences were freedom!

"It was anger more than anything that drove me to do the research and eventually buy Panic Away. I read the material and was initially not that excited. I think I was looking for a method that would not involve any work

and one that would enable me to erase all memories of fears that I had -a magic pill. After reading it a few more times, I put it aside and did not come back to it until I had really reached my wits' end.

"The first time I decided to use the technique was on a shopping trip. I had been planning to purchase curtains for some time now and really wanted to pick them out myself. I arrived at the shopping mall with my husband, scared but also excited as today was going to be different. I could feel it. I began talking to the fear as was taught to me, not reacting to its scary voice but simply observing and talking to it like it was a five year old.

"When the thought of an impending panic attack arose, I actually caught myself about to panic. I was about to tell myself "I am going to die if I do not get home." That was exactly the kind of thought that kept me prisoner all the time. What nonsense. I made a quick U-turn and said, 'NO, you come on! Come on panic, let's have it. Let's have the best you got and make it snappy, I've curtains to buy.'

"Nothing.

"'Come on then with the panic and the dying etc., etc. I have not got all day.'

"A bubble burst there and then. I was now the school teacher keeping the unruly kids (my thoughts) under my control. This was empowering. I finished the trip without a problem, returned home, and celebrated with my husband over a glass of wine.

"My complete recovery was not immediate. It took several more trips along with some major setbacks before I really moved into my own stride. I would soon begin to wake in the morning and actually think about where I

would like to go that day. Before long, I was travelling away from home on my own.

"I hope I can inspire other readers who may experience something similar that the most important thing to remember is that there is hope. Do not let those thoughts trap you into a corner of your mind that says this is the only place you can exist in safety. That is not true. That is simply not true.

Fear of Flying

Flying is often an anxious experience for the average person, so it is understandable what a difficult challenge it poses for a person with high anxiety and frequent panic attacks.

I am going to demonstrate how to apply the One Move to conquer a fear of flying so you will be able to feel confident and safe within yourself while flying both long and short distances.

Most people who suffer from panic attacks generally do not fear a mechanical failure in the aircraft but rather a failure within themselves, i.e., an out-of-control episode of sheer panic while flying. This is because a person who experiences panic attacks feels like he is walking around with an internal bomb that could go off at any moment, sending him into a downward spiral of panic. If this "internal bomb" goes off in a safe place such as the home, it is much easier to deal with it because that environment is a safe zone in the person's mind. Being 30,000 feet in the air creates the dilemma of not feeling safe and comfortable in the environment. There is also often an element of claustrophobia that manifests itself with fear of flying. The person experiencing the anxiety

frequently feels a need for more open space or somewhere to hide and be alone, away from other people.

If you are affected by a fear of flying, when you book your flight, your initial attitude is important. Be excited that you have this opportunity. Remind yourself that while on board you will have new techniques on hand to help you overcome your fear and enable you to fly to far away destinations. Don't worry, you will be perfectly safe on board.

Often a carefree flight begins the night before. Try to ensure you get some good rest before your departure. This will avoid fatigue which could cause you excess stress. On the day of the flight, organize your schedule as best as possible, ensuring there is no hassle getting to the airport, passing through customs, etc. You can do this by giving yourself plenty of time. There is no point adding more stress to an already nervous trip simply because you have to rush through the airport at the last minute.

As you are boarding the plane, you need to reaffirm the fact that should the anxiety manifest itself it will not damage you. As you always have done in the past, you will always move through a period of anxiety unharmed, and being in an airplane does not mean you are in a situation where these thoughts do not apply.

So here is your new approach to flying.

You board the plane, not in the hope that you will feel relaxed and calm but in the hope that you will experience the anxiety you fear.

As always, the real trick to making the One Move fully effective is to throw yourself into the experience completely. If you hold a thought that all feelings or sensations of anxiety are bad, then that will only terrify you more and make you feel less positive about flying.

Board the plane, sit back into your seat, and if you are not feeling any of the familiar anxious sensations, ask them to make themselves felt. If they are there, you want them to reveal themselves to you. You can do this because you are not hiding or running away from them. You are not sitting in your seat praying they do not appear—remember how you reacted before when they started becoming apparent? Most likely, you started to panic and then thought about how being on a plane was the last place in the world you wanted to be. Those thoughts grew in momentum until you scared yourself witless, and this was even before the main cabin door was closed.

If, however, you feel nothing alarming, that's fine; begin distracting yourself with a magazine, book, or music; but to be sure, check your feelings regularly to see if there is anything anxious lingering in the background.

In the hope you will have a panic attack, you are willingly trying to entice the sensations of anxiety. It sounds like the last thing you should be doing on a plane, but remember you are never retreating from the potential arrival of a panic attack. It is the voice inside us that when alerted to a potential panic attack, either screams one of two things:

A) "Please, God, not now, I can't cope with this here. Red Alert!"

or the positive, empowering

B) "There you are; I was expecting you to show up. Well, show me what you got. I am ready, waiting, and interested."

So if you feel the beginnings of a panic attack, that's fine. You were never trying to run away from it; in fact, you were hoping it would emerge so you could face it.

Because the whole situation is so alien to you and you fear a bad outcome, you do need to be a little brave to wholeheartedly request more of the unusual sensations, but the more you can really demand to have an attack during the flight the more empowered and confident you feel in yourself. It can sometimes help to become a bit emotional or excited with the fear when you demand it show itself, as this helps the emotions to release and flow.

If you do experience a rush of adrenaline/fear, you will notice it has a wavelike effect. It courses through the body, and if you pay close attention, you will feel it pass quickly, twenty or thirty seconds. Nothing to fear here. After it passes, confidence returns, until the next wave comes, and the next, until eventually you notice the pattern. And by not reacting, the effect on you is nothing more than bodily sensations minus the panic.

If you are flying with others that you are not that close to, it can help not to tell them about how anxious you are feeling as that can make you feel more uncomfortable around them. They get worried for you, and you may misinterpret their worry as proof that you really should be worried.

Say to yourself:

"I will use my training, and if at a later stage I feel I really need to let them know, I will; for the moment, however, I'm going to ride out the experience myself."

Finally, if you are feeling very anxious in the run up to your flight and it is playing heavily on your mind, here are some extra helpful tips to make you feel more confident about the trip:

- If you are not taking any prescription relaxants, you may consider visiting your doctor and explaining your situation. Even if you never use it, a small prescription of Xanax, for example, is useful. In fact, I recommend you simply have the tablets in your carry-on luggage. This way you can reason with yourself that if you do experience sensations that you are very uncomfortable with, you can always use them to help you calm down. Just knowing you have a crutch in these types of situations goes a long way to quietening those anxious thoughts.
- Drink plenty of fresh water and ensure you have a bottle of water while flying. It is very easy to become dehydrated while flying long distance. Water also helps as you can swallow it during take off and landing in order to equalize the air pressure in your ears.
- If you feel it will help ease the burden of flying, before take off, tell the cabin crew you are a nervous flyer. They are very experienced and familiar with this fear and will always be able to assist you should you need to talk with them. It is their training and part of their job to be of assistance to nervous flyers. Some find telling the cabin crew helps them feel less alone as they fly. The reality is you are not alone; there are probably plenty of other nervous flyers on the same flight as you.

Case Study

Stephen's Fear of Flying

"Until I experienced my first panic attack in 1999, I had flown for many years without any fear of flying whatsoever. After that first panic attack, which incidentally happened while I was attending a church service, my attitude towards flying changed dramatically. Never mind being in an airplane crossing the Atlantic Ocean; for fear of a panic attack, I was now becoming concerned about simply being away from home. I noticed how I started to create excuses in order to avoid flying. I would convince my girlfriend that holidays at home were much more enjoyable, and there really was no need to have to fly off to foreign destinations.

"In 2001, I changed jobs, and part of my new responsibilities entailed taking regular flights. This became a big source of stress for me. I would hardly sleep the night before a flight, and then after managing to force myself on board, I would crack into the booze to help ease my nerves. I was arriving at my destinations slightly drunk, tired, and in no position to do a proper day's work. Something had to change.

"I read about the Panic Away Program on a discussion forum and decided to see if it would help with what was now my chronic fear of flying. I only had a few days to go before flying again and was really looking for a mind miracle. The morning of the flight arrived, and I set off nervously for the airport armed with my small carry-on luggage and the new panic survival skills in my head. The technique made sense to me on paper, but would it "fly" in a real-life situation.

"I sat in my seat at the back of the plane and scanned internally to see how I was feeling. Yes, I was scared. That was fine, I was told to expect that.

The plane taxied out on the runway, and as usual I felt a little more anxious. The funny thing is I really know when a bout of panic is about to begin. My thoughts seem to get tighter, almost vicelike around my mind. My eyes start to dart around the plane, and every little movement or sound distracts me. I had a small bottle of alcohol, I and I wasn't sure if I should down it in one gulp as the usual or try the new technique.

"I must have gotten that kind of excitement soldiers get before they leap over the trench into battle. I remember crying out (in my thoughts) to the anxiety to come and get me—DO YOUR WORST. I sat upright in my seat and awaited the onslaught. I was abandoning myself to the fear in a courageous way. There was a rush of adrenaline, but it didn't feel out of control. Because I was the one who called out for this experience, rather than the waves of fear drowning me, I felt I was surfing them, riding above them not suffocating under them. I continued to do this for several more minutes. As I had read, the fear was moving in wave formation throughout my body, but if that makes any sense, I felt I was somehow burning through it. After the rush was over, I felt exhilarated. I felt brave, a childlike bravery I have not felt in many years.

"That and the flights that followed went wonderfully to plan. After several more flights, I began not to worry so much about the flight the previous night. I started to trust that I would deal with any situation I came across. This is not to say I am now a totally relaxed flyer, as I must admit I still feel a little concerned as I board a plane or if we hit a spot of turbulence. The real difference for me though is that I have passed the hurdle that made the flying experience so terrible. The hurdle was a fear of 'losing it' while in an airplane. I realize now that that hurdle was an illusion. I had allowed my mind to believe that 'losing it' was a very real possibility, and that very thought would send me into a spiral of panic.

“Interestingly, once I tackled the fear of flying, the worry of having a panic attack while on solid ground disappeared. I believe this bonus happened because some part of me reasoned that if I could handle panic while flying without a problem, then a packed cinema or a car journey would be a walk in the park.”

Fear of Public Speaking

It is often observed that many people's top ranking fear is not death but having to speak in public. The joke is that these people would rather be lying in the casket at the funeral than giving the eulogy. Public speaking for people who suffer from panic attacks or general anxiety often becomes a major source of worry weeks or even months before the speaking event is to occur.

These speaking engagements do not necessarily have to be the traditional “on a podium” events but can be as simple as an office meeting where the individual is expected to express an opinion or give verbal feedback. The fear in this case centers on having a panic attack while speaking. The individual fears being incapacitated by the anxiety and hence unable to complete what he or she is saying. The person imagines fleeing the spotlight and having to make all kinds of excuses later for their undignified departure out the office window....

This differs slightly from the majority of people who fear public speaking because their fear tends to revolve around going blank while speaking or feeling uncomfortable under the spotlight of their peers. The jitters or nerves of speaking in public are of course a problem for this group as well, but they are unfamiliar with that debilitating threat which is the panic attack, as they most likely have not experienced one before.

So how should a person with an anxiety issue tackle public speaking?

Stage one is accepting that all these bizarre and quite frankly unnerving sensations are not going to go away overnight. In fact, you are not even going to concern yourself with getting rid of them for your next talk. When they arrive during a speech/meeting, you are going to approach them in a new manner.

What we need to do is build your confidence back to where it used to be before any of these sensations ever occurred. This time you will approach it in a unique, empowering manner, allowing you to feel your confidence again. It is said that most of the top speakers are riddled with anxiety before speaking, but they somehow use this nervousness to enhance their speech. I am going to show you exactly how to do this.

My first point is this and it is important. The average healthy person can experience an extreme array of anxiety and very uncomfortable sensations while giving a speech and is in no danger of ever losing control, or even appearing slightly anxious to the audience. No matter how tough it gets, you will always finish your piece, even if at the outset it feels very uncomfortable to go on. You will not become incapacitated in any way.

The real breakthrough happens when you fully believe that you are not in danger and that the sensations will pass. This in essence is what the One Move technique is meant to encourage; by asking for more you are saying:

"I realize you (the anxiety) hold no threat over me."

What keeps a panic attack coming again and again is the fear of the fear—the fear that the next one will really knock your socks off and you feel you were lucky to have made it past the last one unscathed. As they were so

unnerving and scary, it is your confidence that has been damaged by previous anxiety episodes. Once you fully understand you are not under any threat, then you can have a new response to the anxiety as it arises while speaking.

There is always a turning point when a person moves from general anxiety into a panic attack, and that happens with public speaking when you think to yourself:

"I won't be able to handle this in front of these people."

That split second of self-doubt leads to a rush of adrenaline, and the extreme anxiety arrives in a wave like format. If, however, when you feel the initial anxiety and you react with confidence that this is not a threat to you, you will move out of the anxiety rapidly.

Using this new approach is a powerful ally because it means it is okay to feel scared and feel the anxiety when speaking—that is fine; you are going to feel it and move with and through the sensations in your body and out the other side. Because he or she is feeling very anxious, often before the talk has begun, that person may feel they have already let themselves down. Now, you can relax on that point. It is perfectly natural to feel the anxiety.

Take for example the worst of the sensations you have ever experienced in this situation—be it general unease to loss of breath. You will have an initial automatic reaction that says:

"Danger—I'm going to have an episode of anxiety here and I really can't afford that to happen."

At this point most people react to that idea and confirm it must be true because of all of the unusual feelings they are experiencing. This is where your thinking can lead you down a train of thought that creates a cycle of anxiety that produces a negative impact on your overall presenting skills.

So let that initial “oh dear, not now” thought pass by, and follow it up immediately with the attitude of:

“There you are—I’ve been wondering when you would arrive. I’ve been expecting you to show up—by the way, I am not in the least threatened by any of the strange sensations you are creating—I am completely safe here.”

Instead of pushing the emotional energy and excitement down into your stomach, you are moving out through it. Your body is in a slightly excited state, exactly as it should be while giving a speech, so release that energy in your self-expression. Push it out through your presentation not down into your stomach. You push it out by expressing yourself more forcefully. In this way you turn the anxiety to your advantage by using it to deliver a speech where you come across more alive, energetic and in the present moment.

When you notice the anxiety drop as it does when you willingly move into it. Fire a quick thought off when you get a momentary break (as I am sure you have between pieces), asking it for “more.” You want more of its intense feelings as you are interested in them and are absolutely not threatened by them.

It seems like a lot of things to be thinking about while talking to a group of people, but it is not really. You’d be amazed how many different non-related thoughts you can have while speaking. This approach is about

adopting a new attitude of confidence to what you might have deemed a serious threat up until now.

If your predominant fear of the speaking engagement is driven by a feeling of being trapped, then I would suggest factoring in some mental releases that can be prepared before the event. For example, some meetings/speeches allow for you to turn the attention back to the room to get feedback etc. from the group. If possible, you might want to prepare such opportunities in your own mind before the engagements. This is not to say you have to ever use them, but people in this situation often remark that just having small opportunities where attention can be diverted for the briefest of moments can make the task seem less daunting. It may even be something as simple as having people introduce themselves or opening the floor to questions. I realize these diversions are not always possible and depend on the situation, but anything you can factor in that makes you feel less trapped or under the spotlight is worth the effort.

Case Study

Robert's Experience of Public Speaking

"I am the CEO of a software development company. Frequently I am invited to speak at conferences and showcase some of our products to an audience that can range from small groups to several hundred people. I had been doing this for many years without any problems until I had what was later diagnosed by my doctor as a panic attack. My first panic attack occurred during a rather stressed week. I had a late night the previous evening at a corporate function and was slightly hung over the morning of my presentation.

"I was about to begin my piece when I felt my heart go into a rapid succession of heartbeats and my head started to spin. I felt tingles all down my arm and hot flushes. I was convinced I was having a heart attack. I walked over to the organizer and, under the excuse my power point presentation was acting up, had him schedule me in at the end of the day.

"This incident really scared me, and even though all medical checkups came back fine, I found it hard to believe it was just anxiety. I knew what anxiety was, but I had never experienced it like this before, never to this extreme. As other speaking engagements were scheduled for the rest of the year, I really needed to address this before I totally shied away from appearing in public. This was becoming a real problem in my mind because presenting is a crucial function of my position in the company.

"It was my wife that did the research and bought the Panic Away program for me. We were on a quiet vacation for one week, which allowed me to get some perspective on what was going on. In the evenings I would make notes from the program and see if there was a way I could implement it fully to help me with this fear. The sensations I had felt were very unnerving, and I was not sure if anything other than pharmaceuticals would get me beyond them.

"My next talk did not go perfectly to plan as I felt I have presented better, but the big difference was that I did not fear the sensations that were causing me to panic previously. I thought drugs were needed to numb me to the feelings of fear, but what I learned from the course was that the feelings were fine; they were something my body was doing for whatever reason, rapid heart beats, sweaty palms, tight chest.

"What was new though was my reaction to those alarming inner sensations. Previously, I had been overreacting to them and telling myself I was going to die. Now, I was moving in and around the sensations and even

welcoming them for coming. I was observing and not labelling them as good or bad. They were simply what they were, sensations.

"As time went on, and I got more and more comfortable with feeling a little out of control inside myself before a presentation. It was with this new attitude that the sensations disappeared quickly. During the last talk I did in November I was more relaxed than ever before. I walked on stage with this deep feeling of confidence in my belly; the feeling was grounding me so totally in myself. It was an attitude of:

"Well, here we go again. I am too experienced and long in the tooth to be getting upset by these fearful thoughts and sensations. I'm going to get on with what I am here to do, and if I drop dead on stage then what the heck, I drop dead."

"This is the awakening I had from using the Panic Away program. The One Move was the tool that allowed me to open up to the feeling of:

"Come what may, I am unmoved. I am rock solid inside myself."

"I personally believe we all spend too much time operating from the thoughts in our heads. Most of the people I work with are out of balance with stress. The One move taught me to short circuit the loop of fearful thinking that was causing the panic and move my attention back into my body. By returning to the feelings without overreacting to them, I was no longer pushing them away and creating a build up of pressure. Simply being there with these sensations was allowing them to be processed more effectively and thereby returning me faster to sense of equilibrium."

Chapter 5

When confronted with panic attacks, the One Move technique is the most powerful psychological tool you can use. Apply it anytime you feel a panic attack surface, and it will defuse the situation for you immediately.

We talked about developing a specific strategy of moving towards fear in order to diminish its power and control. It is only when we struggle with, or run away from our anxieties, that they gain momentum. We can only be victims of fear if we allow ourselves to be.

“Do the thing you are afraid to do and the death of fear is certain.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Now, I want to tackle the side-effects of panic attacks. Most people who experience frequent panic attacks describe a lingering background anxiety that stays with them long after the panic attack is over. Panic attacks are not spontaneous, random experiences. They are rooted in an underlying anxiety that acts as the feeding ground for them to occur. Some people claim the attacks come totally out of the blue, but in fact on closer examination the person is usually already feeling an above average level of anxiety before the panic attack begins. It is this background anxiety that we are going to tackle in this chapter.

People describe the general anxiety like a knot in the stomach accompanied by recurring fearful thoughts. This condition is referred to as Generalized Anxiety Disorder or GAD. This generalized anxiety is the breeding ground for future panic attacks, and it is important that it be addressed and eliminated so the individual can go about daily business unimpeded by the uncomfortable stress sensations.

If we create a scale of anxiety from 1 to 10, a full blown panic attack would register at 10 and total, blissful relaxation at 0



In a typical day, the average person in a metropolitan area might have a stress/anxiety rating of somewhere between 4 and 5. In comparison, people who experience panic attacks would say they reach the top of the scale (9/10) during the panic attack and do not fully return to feeling normal for quite some time. What is of particular concern is the fact that a large percentage of people never fully return to normal levels.

Many individuals who experience frequent panic attacks often report that they feel themselves to be in a constant state of anxiety, floating between 6 and 7 almost everyday. They wake in the morning with the anxiety and go to bed with the same feeling of unease. It is almost as if their body is stuck on a permanent setting of high anxiety. This constant anxiety makes them feel jumpy, irritable, and physically unwell. The body becomes tense and uncomfortable and the mind obsessed with the anxious sensations. This permanent tension in the mind and body leads to troublesome sensations such as

- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Exhaustion
- Vision problems
- Cramps
- Intrusive thoughts
- Feelings of unreality and depression

This condition is commonly diagnosed as General Anxiety Disorder (GAD) and is frequently connected to the experience of panic attacks.

If you have been diagnosed with General Anxiety Disorder, do not convince yourself that you have a clinical illness. You do not. This disorder does not mean that you have a physical or mental illness. Your brain is fine; your body is fine. If I had editorial authority over what was printed in text book psychology, I would eliminate the use of the term "disorder." The term is over prescribed and misleading. It conjures up ideas of chaos and a total breakdown of mental function. That is not the case. GAD is a behavioral condition that is habitual, and it can be reversed easily by following a series of steps. You can return to a more relaxed level of living if you follow the steps and psychological techniques I am going to outline for you below.

Treating Generalized Anxiety

Once people practice the One Move technique for the elimination of the panic attacks, the intense fear surrounding the anxiety collapses in on itself. As the panic attacks become less frequent, the general anxiety begins to evaporate as a state of solid calm returns.

If however, after a period of time you feel your general anxiety level has not dropped then you can begin to implement the following steps to treat the lingering anxiety. It may also be the case that you have never experienced “panic attacks” per se but have a constant problem with general anxiety. If that describes your situation, then this chapter is of particular relevance to you.

I will outline five very powerful tools that will enable you to remove any underlying anxiety from your life and allow your body and mind to return to a state of peace and tranquillity. These tools can be used separately, but for the greatest benefit it is best to implement all of them. The tools are as follows:

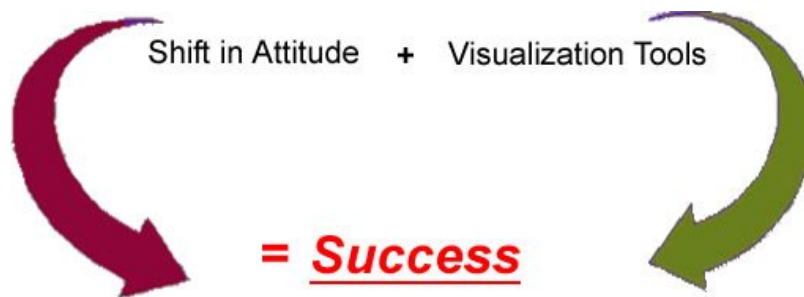
- Eliminating anxious thinking /intrusive thoughts
- Diet
- Exercise
- Distraction
- Thought Field Therapy (TFT)

Dealing with Unwanted Thoughts

In almost all cases of general anxiety, the driving factor fuelling the sensations is anxious thinking. Without addressing these anxious thoughts, there can be little success in eliminating the root of the anxiety. People who experience anxiety and panic attacks frequently have to deal with the negative side-effects of unwanted anxious thoughts. These thoughts can range from worries about health, concern over loved ones, or even fears that do not make any rational sense at all but continue to linger in the mind. Sometimes, the unwanted anxious thoughts come from previous

experiences; other times they are simply bizarre, leaving the person worried as to why such strange thoughts are occurring. In all these cases, the person is upset by the anxious thoughts because they are causing distress and worry. Over the next few pages, I will guide you through a simple two-step process that is in part related to the One Move but tailored specifically to dealing with anxious thinking.

Tackling anxious thinking effectively requires a two-pronged approach. To eliminate the negative thinking patterns, there needs to be a shift in attitude along with specific visualization tools.



The Attitude Shift

It is not the anxious thought in itself that causes you distress. It is how you are responding to that thought. It is the reaction you are having to the thought that enables the thought to have influence and power over you. In order to better understand how unwanted thoughts come about, it helps to paint a playful visual picture of how this happens. This is a fictional example and will help you better understand how to deal with the issue.

Imagine yourself standing on a street and all around you thoughts are floating lazily by. Some of the thoughts are your own, other thoughts are from outside sources you access such as newspapers, TV, magazines, etc. You notice that when you pay attention to a thought it gravitates nearer. The thoughts you ignore float on by.

When you focus and examine a thought up closely, you notice how it connects to another similar thought, and you find yourself jumping from one thought to the next. Sometimes these are practical, day-to-day thoughts such as bills, chores, etc., or the thoughts can be themed by the past or a fantasy/daydream.

In our imagined scenario, you unexpectedly notice a thought hovering in front of you that scares you. This thought is called "Fear X." X could be panic attacks, ill health, or something bizarre. You find it impossible not to look at the thought, and as you give it your full attention, this causes it to come closer and closer. When you examine the thought, you begin to react with fear as you do not like what you see. You further notice how that initial scary thought is connected to more worrying "what if" thoughts that you also examine in detail. The more you try to escape from the thought by pushing it away, the more it seems to follow you around as if it were stuck to you. You try to focus on more pleasant thoughts, but you find yourself continuously coming back to the fearful thought.

There is an expression of "thoughts sticking like glue." The very act of reacting emotionally to the thought glues the thought all the more to you, and the more time you spend worrying and obsessing about the thought, the more that glue becomes hardened over time. The thought and all its associated connected thoughts are there in the morning when you wake and there at night when you are trying to get some sleep. The thought becomes stuck to your psyche because your emotional reaction to it is its sticking power. Thoughts are a form of energy neither good nor bad. It is how we judge those thoughts that determines how much impact they have on our lives. Thoughts need firstly to be fed by attention, but what they really love is a good strong emotional reaction to make them stick!

Thoughts that stay with us are first attracted to us by the attention we pay them and then stuck firmly in place by the level of emotional reaction we have to them.

This is an important point. A thought can only have an influence over you if you allow it to. The emotional reaction from us is a thought's energy source. What's interesting is that either a positive or a negative emotional reaction is fine for the thought. Energy and attention is what it is attracted to. Once you are having an emotional reaction to a thought, you will be regularly drawn to that thought until the emotional reaction has lost its energy and faded away.

For example, if someone you know pays you a very positive compliment, you may find yourself unintentionally drawn to that thought anytime you have a spare moment. You probably find it improves your overall level of confidence and mood throughout the day. Sadly however, we tend to focus less on the positive and more on the negative. We seem to forget those positive compliments all too easily and are drawn more frequently to what might upset us. Taking the opposite example, if someone you know insults you, I am sure that you find the emotional reaction to that thought much more intense and probably very long-lasting.

So the basic pattern of thinking is as follows:

If you are not engaged with an activity or task, your mind will tend to wander to any thoughts that you are having a strong emotional reaction to. In general, as they are the ones that you are probably reacting most strongly to, angry or fearful thoughts seem to surface quickly.

What I am suggesting is that the most ineffective way to eliminate unwanted thoughts is to try and suppress them. Thought suppression studies, (Wegner, Schneider, Carter, & White, 1987) have proven that the

very act of trying to suppress a thought, only results in a higher frequency of the unwanted thought occurring. This reoccurrence of the thought has been termed the 'rebound effect'. Simply put; the more you try suppressing a thought, the more the unwanted thought keeps popping up (rebounding).

So how do we begin to tackle this problem of unwanted thoughts?

There needs to be a change of attitude. By a change in attitude, I mean a change in the way you have been reacting to the thoughts. A change in attitude will quickly disarm the emotional reaction you are having to the fearful thoughts. Once the emotional reaction has been significantly reduced, the unwanted anxious thoughts will dissipate. In the past you have probably tried to rid yourself of the thoughts by attempting to struggle free of them. The trick, however, is not to attempt to be free of them but to have a new reaction to them when they run through your mind. We can never fully control what goes through our minds, but we can control how we react to what goes on there. That is the key difference between someone who gets caught up in fearful thinking and someone who does not.

The thoughts that terrify us are not fuelled by some unknown force; they are our own. We empower them and equally we dismiss them. When you have an uncomfortable thought you would rather not be thinking, your first reaction is usually to tense up internally and say to yourself, "Oh no, I don't like that idea. I don't want that thought right now." The very act of trying to push the thought away and then understandably getting upset when that does not work causes the thought to become more stuck to your psyche.

It's like saying to your mind over and over again "whatever you do, do not think of pink elephants," and guess what? You can't get a single thought in that is not related to pink elephants.

As long as you struggle with the thought, your mind, like a bold child, will keep returning to it. This is not to say your mind is maliciously working against you. It is better to compare the mind to a radar scanner that picks up on thoughts within us that have high levels of emotional reaction connected to them.

To not react emotionally you need to learn to dis-empower the "fear factor" of the thought; then you must accept and be comfortable with whatever comes to mind. Don't hide from or push the anxious thoughts away.

So to take an example:

Say you have fear "X" going on in your mind. That fear can be virtually anything your mind can conceive. You know the thoughts are not a realistic fear, and you want them to stop interrupting your life.

Next time the fearful thought comes to mind, do not push it away. This is important.

Tell yourself that that is fine and that the thought can continue to play in your mind if it wishes, but you are not going to give it much notice and you are certainly not going to qualify it by reacting with fear. You know in your heart that the thought is very unlikely to happen. You have a deeper sense of trust and will not be tossed around emotionally all day by a thought. Say to yourself:

"Well that thought/fear is a possibility, but it is very remote and I am not going to worry about that right now. Today I am trusting that all is well."

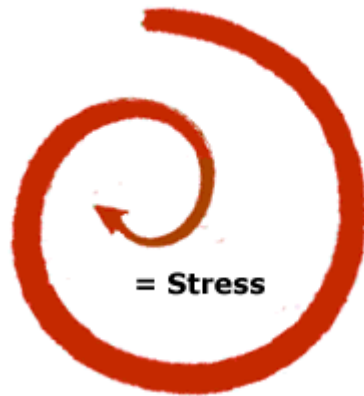
What is of key importance is not to get upset by the thoughts and feelings as they arise. To avoid any fearful emotional reaction to the fear/thought gives

the fear some cartoon characteristics. Imagine for example it is Donald Duck telling you that "Something awful is going to happen. Aren't you scared?" Give the character a squeaky voice and make it a totally ridiculous scene. How can you take seriously an anxious duck with his big feet? This use of cartoon imagery reprograms the initial emotional reaction you might have had to the thought and eliminates any authority the thought may have over you. You are reducing the thought's threat. When that is done, move your attention back to whatever you were doing. Remember, you are not trying to push the thought away or drown it out with some outside stimulus.

This takes practice in the beginning, but what will happen is that you will find yourself checking how you think/feel less and less during the day, and as it does not have a strong fearful emotion connected to it, your mind will not be drawn to the troublesome thought. To put in another way, the thought becomes unstuck and fades away because the emotional reaction has been neutralized. In fact, that is the first step to moving away from anxious thoughts—neutrality. It is as if your mental energy was spinning in a negative cycle while you were caught in the anxious thoughts. Now, you are learning to stop the negative cycle, and move into neutral (see illustration below).

From this new position of neutrality, you will experience a much greater sense of clarity away from the confusion of an overanxious mind. Moving into this mindset of neutrality is your first step. Thoughts generally lead us in one direction or another -a positive cycle (peace/sense of control and order) or a negative cycle (anxiety/ fear/ disorder). The next step is to adopt a relaxed peaceful state of mind and move your energy into a positive cycle of thinking.

Negative Thinking Cycle



Neutral

Positive Thinking Cycle



I am now going to outline a technique that will really boost your confidence and sense of well being as it moves your mind and emotions into a positive state of mind. When you practice this exercise, you will feel a lightness and greater sense of perspective on anything that has been troubling you. You are putting a greater emotional distance between you and the anxiety as your thoughts move in the opposite direction to the anxiety.

- I want you to close your eyes and move your attention to your heart area. Imagine a feeling of warmth emanating from the center of your chest.
- Begin to focus on something in your life that you feel a genuine sense of appreciation for. This can be one or more things that you really appreciate having in your life (e.g., family, health, friends, work, your home, etc.).
- Continue to focus on this for several more minutes until you feel grateful in your heart and notice a positive change in your emotional state.

The practice of being appreciative of what you have in life is a very old tool for positive change and has been taught in most of the world's religions for centuries. It is currently very popular in numerous self-help programs. The Heart Math Institute (www.heartmath.com) has carried out some very interesting research into the heart and how it is intimately linked to the brain through the central nervous system. They conclude that focusing on the heart and generating positive emotions sends signals to the brain that cause the higher brain centers to work in greater harmony. This has the benefit of lowering blood pressure and reducing tension and stress throughout the body.

The above exercise completes the first pronged approach to dealing with the anxious thoughts, the shift in attitude. You will need to practice the shift in attitude daily until it becomes second nature to you.

You might have wondered why it is that some people seem more susceptible to worries and unwanted thoughts than others. You now know the answer to that. The difference is that the people who seem carefree are the ones who are not reacting with a strong fearful emotion to an anxious thought. These people see the same array of thoughts as an anxious person, but they do not make a fearful thought a part of their lives. They dismiss the thought or laugh it off and have a sense of trust that things will work out fine. They see no point in reacting with fear to these thoughts, and that ensures the thought has no power or authority over them.

You may feel that you are by nature an anxious person and that you will always react with fear to these thoughts because you have done so for years. That is not the case. Continuous or obsessive anxious thinking is a behavioral habit, and just like any habit it can be unlearned. I have outlined the quickest and most effective way to do this by using a unique shift in

attitude. You can undo years of anxious thinking and reduce your level of general anxiety very quickly. All it takes is practice.

I mentioned in the beginning of this section that to fully eliminate the anxious thoughts a two-pronged approach is most effective. I will now explain the second part of this approach, which is the use of a visualization tool.

Visualization Tool for Ending Anxious Thinking

Anxiety causes an imbalance in your life whereby all of the mental worry creates a top-heavy sensation. All of your focus is moved from the center of your body to the head. Schools of meditation often like to demonstrate an example of this top-heavy imbalance by showing how easily the body can lose its sense of center.

A student is asked to come to the front of the group and stand with his legs apart. The teacher then asks the student to focus on a personal worry or concern. Once the student is fixated on the worry, the teacher quietly moves to the side of the student and tells him he is going to attempt to push him over. The teacher pushes on the student's shoulder and is able to topple the student with relative ease. The same student is then asked to forget the worry and focus his attention on a grounding visualization. The teacher once again attempts to topple the student but finds much more resistance than previously. The student is grounded firmly in place. The class is given this demonstration to display how important it is to feel grounded and centered in the present and not continuously caught in mental activity. When caught in mental anxieties, a person can feel disconnected from life as they go through life on autopilot.

I am going to teach you a single visualization that is separated into three parts. The purpose of the visualization is to enable you to quickly clear mental stress and tension. The visualization can be used when feeling stressed and is particularly useful when your mind is racing with fearful thoughts. There are numerous such visualizations found in different self help courses, but I have combined three of the most effective ones and adapted them so that the resultant single visualization can be used literally anywhere.

This visualization process, when practiced frequently, is very effective for eliminating deep-seated mental anxieties or intrusive thoughts. To gain maximum benefit, the exercise must be carried out for longer than 10 minutes at a time, as anything shorter will not bring noticeable results. There is no right or wrong way to carry out the visualization. Be intuitive with it and do not feel you are unable to carry it out if you feel you are not very good at seeing mental imagery. As long as your attention is on the exercise, you will gain benefit. It is best to do this exercise in a quiet place where you won't be disturbed, and then when you are more practiced you will be able to get the same positive results in a more busy environment such as the workplace. You should notice a calming effect on your state of mind along with a sensation of mental release and relaxation.

Okay, let's begin.

Either sitting or standing, close your eyes and move your attention to your breath. To become aware of your breathing, place one hand on your upper chest and one on your stomach. Take a breath and let your stomach swell forward as you breathe in and fall back gently as you breathe out. Take the same depth of breath each time and try to get a steady rhythm going. Your hand on your chest should have little or no movement. Again, try to take

the same depth of breath each time you breathe in. This is called Diaphragmatic Breathing.

When you feel comfortable with this technique, try to slow your breathing rate down by instituting a short pause after you have breathed out and before you breathe in again. Initially, it may feel as though you are not getting enough air in, but with regular practice this slower rate will soon start to feel comfortable.

It is often helpful to develop a cycle where you count to three when you breathe in, pause, and then count to three when you breathe out (or 2, or 4—whatever is comfortable for you). This will also help you focus on your breathing without any other thoughts coming into your mind. If you are aware of other thoughts entering your mind, just let them go and bring your attention back to counting and breathing. Continue doing this for a few minutes. (If you practice this, you will begin to strengthen the Diaphragmatic Muscle, and it will start to work normally—leaving you with a nice relaxed feeling all the time.)

Now move your attention to your feet. Try to really feel your feet. See if you can feel each toe. Picture the base of your feet and visualize roots growing slowly out through your soles and down into the earth. The roots are growing with quickening pace and are reaching deep into the soil of the earth. You are now rooted firmly to the earth and feel stable like a large oak or redwood tree. Stay with this feeling of grounded safety and security for a few moments.

Once you have created a strong feeling or impression of being grounded like a tree, I want you to visualize a cloud of bright light forming way above you. A bolt of lightning from the luminous cloud hits the crown of your head, and that ignites a band of bright white light descending slowly from your head all the way down your body, over your legs, and out past your

toes. As the band of light passes over you, feel it clearing your mental state. It is illuminating your mind and clearing any rubbish that you may have been thinking about. Repeat this image four or five times until you feel a sense of clearing and release.

In finishing, see yourself standing under a large, luminescent waterfall. The water is radiant and bubbling with vitality and life. As you stand under the waterfall, you can feel the water run over every inch of your body, soothing you and instilling within you a sense of deep calm. Try to taste the water. Open your mouth and let it run into your mouth, refreshing you. Hear it as it bounces off the ground around you. The water is life itself and it is washing away stress and worry from your mind and body.

After a moment, open your eyes.

Try to use all of your senses when carrying out the visualization. To make the pictures in your mind as real as possible, use your senses of touch, taste, and hearing. Feel the water trickle down your body; hear the sound it makes as it splashes over you.

The more realistic the imagined scenarios, the more benefit you will gain. Many people report very beneficial and soothing results from using these simple visualizations frequently. The mind is much like a muscle in that, in order to relax, it needs to regularly release what it is holding onto. By visualizing the different situations, you are allowing your mind to release. It is like sending a message to your brain that when you close your eyes and begin this process it is time for letting go of anything that it has been mentally holding onto. To begin with, in order to train your mind how to let go of the stress, it is important to practice this daily. With practices, you can learn to release all stress within minutes of starting the exercise. I recommend your daily practice take place before going to bed, as that will enable you to sleep more soundly. Many people do not do these

visualizations in the bedroom but some other room before going to bed. That way, when they enter the bedroom and close the door, they are leaving the mental stress behind them.

Visualization as a tool for dealing with mental stress is very effective. If such visualization is carried out properly, you can reach a deep feeling of inner calm. From experience, however, I do not find visualization work to be sufficient to end a panic or anxiety attack (that is left to the One Move technique), but it is a very powerful support tool for ridding yourself of general anxiety sensations.

That concludes the two-pronged approach to dealing with anxious thoughts. With practice, you find you go days without having those anxious thoughts interrupt your life, and importantly, this significantly reduces the level of general anxiety you feel. We are now going to look at the next important tool, which is diet.

Diet

Water

There is no quicker way to reduce general anxiety than having good eating and drinking habits. One of the most easily implemented and effective additions to your diet is fresh water. Water is a great quencher of thirst—but more importantly for this course—also of anxiety.

Nearly every function of the body is monitored and pegged to the efficient flow of water through our system. Water transports hormones, chemical messengers, and nutrients to vital organs of the body. When we don't keep

our bodies well-hydrated, they may react with a variety of signals such as anxiety, which we would never think are related to our poor drinking habits.

Here are some interesting information about water:

1. Seventy-five percent of Americans are chronically dehydrated.
2. In 37% of Americans, the thirst mechanism is so weak that it is often mistaken for hunger.
3. Even MILD dehydration will slow down one's metabolism as much as 3%.
4. One glass of water will shut down midnight hunger pangs for almost 100% of the dieters studied in a University of Washington study.
5. Lack of water is the #1 trigger of daytime fatigue.

Regular fresh drinking water is a vital ingredient to your diet. When we are dehydrated, our cells can feel this at a molecular level and communicate this to the subconscious as an underlying subtle anxiety. The key to rebalancing a deficit of fluids is to drink eight glasses of fresh water daily.

Have you noticed the effects of dehydration on your emotions before? If you have ever suffered from a serious hangover from a night out on the tiles, you will understand the feeling of dehydration all too well. Hangovers result from dehydration and electrolyte imbalance. I am sure many of you are familiar with the tendency to have what has become known as "the hangover fear." This is a heightened sense of anxiety and jumpiness that results from the dehydration caused by a hangover. The surest way for someone who suffers from anxiety to experience a panic attack is to drink excessive amounts of alcohol and wait for the hangover to set in the following day.

It is important to be aware that dehydration is a factor that contributes to anxiety. The good news is that it is easily remedied by drinking regular fluids. Personally, I have found that not only does regular intake of water wards off any subtle feelings of anxiety, but it is also incredibly effective for building stamina and avoiding fatigue.

Diet (Food)

On average, most people have a very acidic diet, which results in not just a lower resistance to stress but to a variety of serious health problems. Your diet is something you can immediately control. As you master your diet, not only are you improving your overall well-being but are also building up a positive mental attitude, which says, "I am in control of my body."

If our internal environment is too acidic, this can exaggerate any anxiety we may be experiencing. The body is in a greater state of health when it is balanced internally. What is needed is to bring the body's internal pH balance into acceptable parameters. The elimination of high anxiety is not easy unless you maintain an alkaline balance in the food you eat. If your food is too acidic or you indulge in excessive amounts of foods, your body cannot function at its best. It will have difficulty eliminating toxins from your body, and will have less of a buffer zone to stress, leaving you feeling vulnerable and shaken when anxiety strikes.

Food such as salt, sugar, and refined or processed products lower your body's resistance, whereas food such as fruit and vegetables raise it. As you control your body's needs, you empower yourself and gradually build a body that does not feel threatened by an onslaught of high anxiety.

Proteins, nuts, grains, and dairy products (except yoghurt) along with alcohol, sugar, and salt are acidic foods.

Fruit, vegetables, and juices, are alkaline.

For optimum balance you need an 80% alkaline diet. This means concentrating on fruits and raw vegetables using proteins in small quantities for when you need energy. A person with a good diet needs only 50 g of protein a day. This should consist of 7 ounces of animal protein (or a vegetarian equivalent) or 36 ounces of good yoghurt. The rest of your diet should be alkaline (should you have a very strenuous or physical occupation you may need more than 50 g of protein a day).

Below is a more comprehensive list of alkaline foods that will help bring greater balance to your diet.

Parsnips	Rutabagas	Cauliflower
Mushrooms	Green Beans	
Green Peas	White Potatoes	Tomatoes
Muskmelon	Cantaloupe	Limes
	Tangerines	Strawberries
Pineapple		
Oranges	Grapes	Apricots
Blackberries	Peaches	Raspberries
Pears	Apples	Beans, Dried
Dried Figs	Dried Dates	Bananas
Raisins	Avocados	Prunes
Sweet Potatoes	Watermelons	Honeydew Melon
Almonds	Millet	Molasse,
Beet Greens	Celery	Chard Leaves
Watercress	Sauerkraut	Lettuce
Green Limas	Cucumbers	Radishes
Cabbage	Broccoli	Beets
Brussel Sprouts	Carrots	Green Soybeans
Raw Spinach		

Minerals

Mineral stores in your body have a buffering action on acid and tend to alkalize the acidity in the internal environment. Low or deficient mineral stores can lead to acidic bodily pH. The buffering action of mineral stores keeps the pH toward the healthier and slightly alkaline side of the pH scale. This buffering system is delicately balanced and can get disrupted under mineral-deficient conditions. Both the acid and mineral residues are discarded through the urinary tract. Over time, this depletes the mineral stores if they are not replaced. This is the reason we should ensure to get adequate mineral levels in our diets. If we don't get adequate levels through the fruits and vegetables we eat, then we need to use good quality supplement minerals.

Nutrients that are paramount in helping the body cope with stress include B complex, raw adrenal concentrate, desiccated liver, flax seed oil, and colloidal minerals. A balanced B-complex vitamin supplement is essential in normal pituitary and adrenal function. Without B complex, these glands will not produce adequate hormone levels.

Minerals are absolutely essential in normal bodily functions including autonomic nervous system function. A good example of their importance is demonstrated by the role a mineral, such as magnesium, plays in bodily functioning. Magnesium is instrumental in over 270 biochemical reactions in the body. It also helps regulate the pH (acid-base balance) of the human physiology. The human body functions within a very narrow pH range. Sodium and potassium are essential in nervous system functioning. Without either one of them, our nervous system would be inoperable and we would die. These minerals are usually found naturally in the vegetable that we eat. However, the mineral content in vegetables has diminished over the years from the depletion of the soil. Therefore, it may be necessary to take mineral supplements.

The truth is that it can be very difficult to maintain composure and confidence in your ability to handle all that life throws your way if your

body is malnourished or deficient in vital foodstuffs. Look after your body's needs, and you will be strengthening your body's ability to handle not only panic attacks, but also all forms of daily stress.

I am convinced over the next five to ten years, a definitive link will be made between diet and the increased occurrence of anxiety and panic attacks in the population at large. There are some very interesting research currently being conducted in 2004 into the connection between improving schizophrenia dramatically using a gluten-free diet. Although schizophrenia has nothing to do with anxiety or panic attacks, it is an example of how science is looking to foodstuffs and their connection to our mental health.

Exercise

Exercise is a wonderful all-around practice for gaining the upper hand on stress and anxiety. Besides all of the well-documented benefits of exercising on a regular basis, it also helps to greatly increase confidence and belief in the ability of one's body.

During a panic attack, many of the symptoms are similar to those of a really good workout:

- Increased heartbeat rate
- Sweating
- Increased bodily sensations
- Rapid breathing

One of the greatest advantages of a healthy cardiovascular workout is that it teaches you to be comfortable with your body in a heightened state of exertion. Vigorous exercise allows us the opportunity to safely exert our bodies to a heightened state of activity not dissimilar to the way our bodies react during a panic attack. Exercise pushes our boundaries out further of what is acceptable exertion, and trains us to become more

comfortable with physical sensations such as heavy breathing and rapid heartbeat. This builds new confidence in our body's ability to handle strenuous levels of exertion. If you are giving your body regular opportunities to move from an exerted state back to a relaxed one, you will feel no threat should your heartbeat increase rapidly during a panic attack. You will have the experience and confidence to say to yourself that your body is well able to handle such a state as it has done so many times before. You have the awareness that in a short period of time your body will return as always to a more relaxed state.

For many, the compounding fear factor of a panic attack comes from the anxiety about unusual bodily reactions. Exercise is a healthy, self-imposed stress on the body. It helps us release the pent-up tensions inside, and can be a useful exhaust or vent for any emotions that need to be released.

The requirement for proper exercise to help you build this innate confidence in your body's physical ability is an exercise regime with a minimum of 20 to 30 minutes of cardiovascular exercise. The exercise could be power walking, jogging, running, swimming—anything that gets you working up a good sweat. When beginning your exercise program, it is best to go easy and set modest goals. Choose an activity that is convenient to do and one you enjoy so that you will stick with it.

Get your body in a heightened state of exertion, where your heart is beating rapidly and you are breathing heavily. The best exercise is one where you work yourself to a peak for a few minutes, then slow down, rest, and build yourself up again. This helps push your body further each time and always moving upward, never stagnant. As you really get your body in shape, your overall confidence improves. I'm sure you have already experienced the natural lift exercise can give. It sends a clear message throughout your body that having your heartbeat in quick succession, or increased respiration, are perfectly natural and well within your body's capability.

Recent research proves that exercise fuels the brain's stress buffers. Preliminary evidence suggests that physically active people have lower rates of anxiety and depression than sedentary people. Researchers are now looking at possible links between exercise and brain chemicals associated with stress, anxiety, and depression. Research carried out by Mark Sothmann, PhD, of the Indiana University School of Medicine suggests that biologically, exercise seems to give the body a chance to practice dealing with stress. It forces the body's physiological systems—all of which are involved in the stress response—to communicate much more closely than usual: the cardiovascular system communicates with the renal system, which then communicates with the muscular system.

All of these are controlled by the central and sympathetic nervous systems, which also must communicate with each other. This workout of the body's communication system may be the true value of exercise.

There is no doubt about it, beginning and sticking with a proper exercise regime takes commitment. If you feel you do not have the time to invest in this, you may have missed a very important point. Exercising will have a tremendously positive benefit on your mental, emotional, and physical health. Your energy levels will soar, your resistance to stress will increase, therefore reducing the general feelings of anxiety that we spoke about earlier. Your general outlook on life will improve as your confidence in your own body grows. As a final point on exercise, be kind to yourself, do not berate yourself if you feel you are out of shape because you can't jog around the block. Take it slowly to begin with and be determined. If you can incorporate regular exercise into your life, the benefits will be profound.

(There are many books available at local bookstores, and on the Internet regarding proper exercise implementation. Should you have a health condition of course as always, consult your doctor first.)

Distraction

To move away from generalized anxiety, you need to throw yourself 100% into whatever is at hand. It may be difficult to do this at first, especially if what you are occupied with are daily chores such as washing the dishes or grocery shopping, which tends not to be very engaging. What is needed is to engage regularly with an activity that stimulates you and holds your complete attention. Something you can become completely immersed in. The more physical the activity is, the better.

Some of the possible activities that interest you could be gardening, playing a musical instrument, engaging in any kind of sport, or simply having a good conversation with a friend. The idea here is finding something that you can repeat on a regular basis that will take you out of your mental thoughts and into life.

Something that distracts you is a very valuable tool in taking your attention away from the uncomfortable sensation of anxiety that may be lingering in your body. The more you become involved in one of these activities, the more you are engaging with life and the less stagnant and anxious you will feel. One of the best distractions I could recommend for anybody who is unsure of an activity that might interest them is to volunteer in a local voluntary scheme. It could be anything from doing soup runs for the homeless, to environmental conservation. If you can spare even one or two hours a week for such work not only will you feel your self-esteem improve, but it will fully shake off any lingering feelings of isolation or loneliness which are feelings often accompanied by anxiety and panic attacks. One thing you can be certain of is that there is some organization near you crying out for a volunteer just like you to assist them with their work.

The art of distraction has always been used to help people refocus and avoid concentrating on whatever physical or emotional discomfort the person is going through. It may just be the caring friend who invites a

recently heartbroken roommate out to town to have some fun. Dentists and doctors use distraction techniques frequently to distract the patient from a physical discomfort they may be experiencing by giving them something else to focus on (usually with the bill). The purpose of using distraction for people who want to live anxiety-free is to have new experiences that do not remind the individual of the anxiety disorder that has been affecting their lives.

If you imagine that all the fearful, anxious thoughts that go through your mind are like a roll of film being run through a film projector (your mind) and out into your life, concentrating on some activity immediately cuts the film and brings you directly into the here and now. When you are living in the moment, there is no room for any anxiety disorder whatsoever. This buys both your body and mind much needed relaxation time to expel any excess chemicals in your system that can lead to feelings of anxious discomfort.

Thought Field Therapy (TFT)

For the fourth and final tool aimed at eliminating any feelings of anxiety from your system, I want to introduce you to a revolutionary natural treatment that I have received many exciting reports about: Thought Field Therapy (TFT).

Tens of thousands of people are using this technique to treat the psychological problems of anxiety, phobias, and negative emotions in general. TFT is proving to be a very powerful tool in helping people to overcome their fears. I am adding it here for you as an additional tool to

help you completely eliminate any of the lingering background anxiety we spoke about earlier. What is wonderful about the technique is that it is completely safe and can be applied to your situation for effective results within minutes.

Thought Field Therapy is different than any other psychological treatment that you probably have ever used or heard about. It is a system that accesses and resolves the essence and the root cause of the problem, be it panic attacks, trauma, phobias, grief, etc., simply by tapping specific points on the body. To fully understand the TFT approach, a short introduction to acupuncture is needed, as that is where its foundations lie.

Acupuncture taps into the body's energy system. This ancient healing system that developed in China is based on the premise that stimulating the flow of energy activates the body's own healing network. It is around this energy of the body that TFT applies its technique. TFT is a process whereby tapping is applied to the exact points where traditionally a needle would be inserted, to stimulate the energy or Qi and dissolve blockages of energy patterns from the person's system.

Thought field therapists describe emotions as condensed information in energy form, bound in what is referred to as a "thought field." The treatment is based on influencing the body's bioenergy field by tapping with your fingers on specific points of the body located along energy meridians. It is believed that counterproductive or "negative" emotions become blocked or stagnant in the energy field and this results in the development of anxieties, irrational fears, etc. These "negative" emotions are then eliminated by a series of tapping on specific points.

I must admit I was skeptical of this therapy when I was first introduced to it but the reports and feedback from people who have experimented with it are very encouraging. In a user-friendly process, I have outlined below the specific TFT treatment for anxiety and panic attacks. First, the individual is encouraged to think about the problem, i.e., the anxiety and panic attacks, and then quantifies the intensity of the emotional upset

they are feeling on a scale of 1 to 10. Following that is a series of tapping exercises on specific parts of the body in a particular sequence. As this is carried out, there is an elimination of imbalances in the body's energy system, and in the process an eradication of the negative emotion and symptoms of psychological distress.

Can it really work for you? Well, the simplest way is to try it out. The really interesting thing about this technique is that results are almost instantaneous. As nothing more than simply tapping on the body is required, it is a completely simple and harmless therapy to experiment with. I have had some very positive feedback about this technique, particularly in its ability to completely dissolve the tight-knotted feeling in the stomach so often associated with high anxiety.

What follows is the sequence of tapping exercises used for treating anxiety and panic attacks. (There are different sequences for a wide range of negative emotions and phobias in TFT.)

Step 1

Intentionally think about your anxiety and any panic attacks you may have experienced. Try to feel the distress that situation causes you. Rate the distress you feel on a scale of 1 to 10.

Scale 1 indicates absolutely no distress at all, while 10 means total distress. This is called the subject units of distress (SUD) rating.

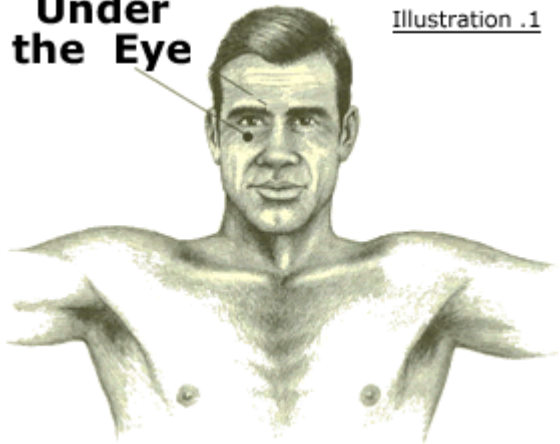
Step 2

Using two fingers, tap under the eye about 2 cm below the bottom of the eyeball, at the center of the bony orbit, high on the cheek. Tap solidly, but not nearly enough to hurt. About five taps will do. (See illustration 1 below.)

Note: It does not matter on which side of the body the treatment point is tapped. You can tap down along the left or right hand side.

**Under
the Eye**

Illustration .1



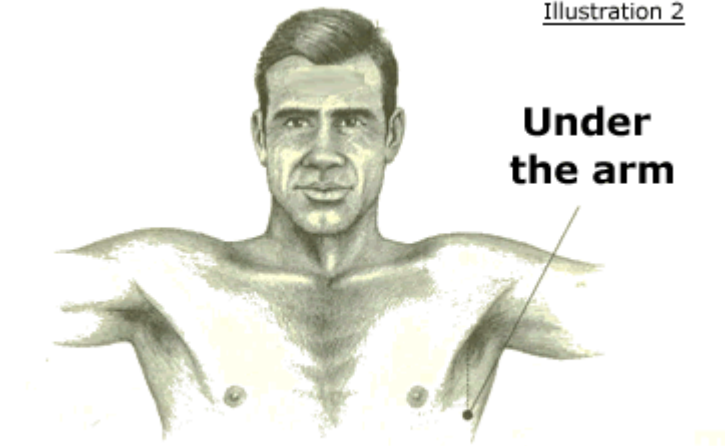
Step 3

Tap solidly on the side of your chest under your arm, about 4 inches directly below the armpit on the chest wall, again five times. This point is level with the nipple for the male and about the centre of the bra panel under the arm for the female.

(See Illustration 2 below)

Illustration 2

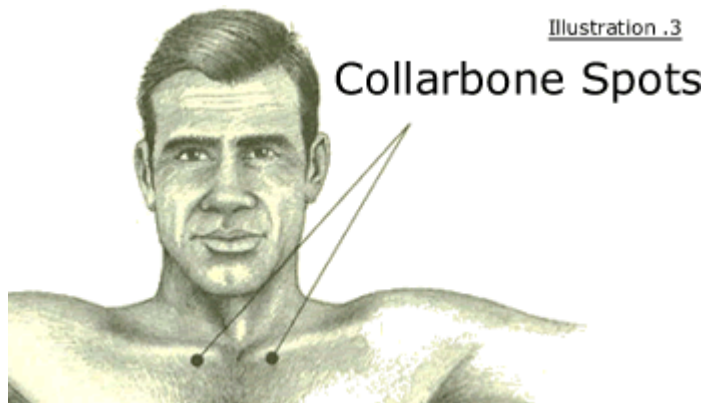
**Under
the arm**



Step 4

Find the "collar bone point" in the following manner. Take two fingers of either hand and run them down the center of the throat until the superior end of the sternum (top of the breastbone) is reached. From this point, go straight down 3 cm; from this point go to the right or left 3 cm. Tap this point five times.

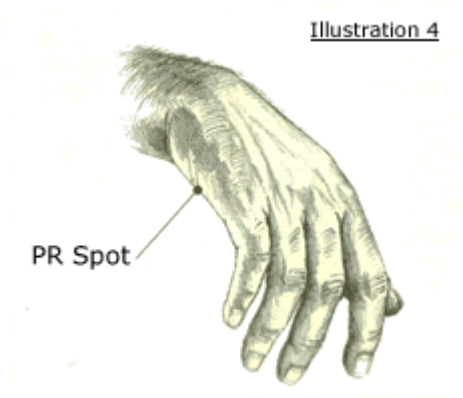
(See Illustration 3 below)



Step 5

At this time, ask yourself how you are feeling. If the decrease is 2 or more points, continue with Step 6. Only if there is no change or only a very small change in the way that you feel, follow these instructions here, otherwise continue to Step 6:

- ❖ Find the PR spot (see Illustration 4). It is located on the outside of the hand about midway between the wrist and the base of the little finger. Tap this point five times with the fingers of the opposite hand and then return to Step 1.



Step 6

Okay, you have noticed some decrease in your anxiety or feelings towards your panic attacks. This next step is called the gamut spot. It is located on the back of your hand—about an inch below the raised knuckle of the ring finger and the little finger when making a fist. (See Illustration 5 below.) Begin tapping the spot with two fingers of the opposite hand about three times per second and continue tapping when performing the series of steps below.



1. Eyes closed
2. Eyes open
3. Move eyes down to one side, head still
4. Move eyes down to the opposite side, head still
5. Roll eyes in a circle in one direction

6. Roll eyes in a circle in the opposite direction
7. Hum a few notes of a tune
8. Count 1 to 5 out loud
9. Hum a few notes of a tune

The trick here is to keep tapping the gamut spot while simultaneously doing the above steps.

Step 7

Now take another SUD rating. In other words, how do you feel now about your anxiety on a scale of 1 to 10?

If you feel you have achieved a rating of 1—that is you have no lingering anxiety—then perform the final Step 8. If you feel it has decreased but not significantly, return to Step 5 and tap the PR spot as outlined in Step 5. In this case, however, increase the amount of times you tap the spot to 15 instead of 5.

Note: the PR spot is used for people who are not getting maximum results. It stimulates a point where the energy may need additional stimulation to get it unblocked and moving freely.

Step 8

The floor-to-ceiling eye roll is given at the end of a successful series of treatments. The person usually reports a 1 or a 2 on the scale and this treatment serves to consolidate a 1 and to bring a 2 to a 1. The subject taps the gamut spot (see Illustration 5) on the back of the hand while the head is held level (many people want to move their head in this exercise rather than their eyes so try to keep your head straight.). Now, while tapping the gamut spot:

- Rotate your eyes downwards to look at the floor and then

- - Rotate vertically (taking about 10 seconds) all the way up to look at the ceiling. The gamut spot must be tapped constantly during the moving of the eyes.

That's it!

I realize some of this can sound a little strange but I truly believe the results you will feel after to be evidential proof that there is definitely a very effective result achieved using Thought Field Therapy. From studies performed the results are not just short-term solutions but are generally complete elimination of whatever fear or phobia is being treated.

This is a growing new field and there is an available wealth of information regarding it. I recommend you read the book Thought Field Therapy by Roger Callahan, PhD, for more information on the background of the therapy and the studies that have been conducted on its effectiveness. I would be interested to hear more feedback on this technique from you.

Chapter 6

To Medicate or Not

If you are on anti-anxiety medication for your panic attacks, well done for having gone out and seeking medical advice. Many who experience panic attacks fear that a visit to the doctor will only lead to being told that their condition is much worse than they had imagined. There seems to be too much information out there on panic attacks that make one feel guilty and weak, simply for using pharmaceuticals to help you through the day.

Medication for panic attacks can be very beneficial if, like everything else, they are not abused. There are thousands of people who would not be able to hold down a job or regain any sense of a fulfilled life were it not for the medication they have been prescribed with by their doctor. In my mind, the danger with medication occurs when the user becomes overdependent on the medication, when the very thought of forgetting to bring the medication out with you will trigger a panic attack.

Most good medics advise a proper treatment plan, ensuring that once the user starts to feel more in control of their panic attacks, they will then gradually decrease the dosage. Under no circumstance should such a patient eliminate the use of pharmaceuticals completely without consulting the doctor. Apply the “One Move” technique and the four tools described above. When you feel you are making good improvement (as you will do in a very short period of time), discuss the situation with your doctor.

When discussing medication, it is only right to examine natural or herbal methods, which are becoming increasingly popular, to lessen the strength and frequency of panic attacks. The argument of using a natural approach

is that they tend to be less addictive and have fewer side-effects than conventional medicine. The most effective natural approach I want to mention briefly is Bach herbal remedies.

The late Edward Bach, M.D., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H. (CAMB.), gave up his practice and research in 1930 to devote his time fully to the finding of the remedies and the perfecting of his method of flower healing. He sought for remedies in the plant world, which would restore vitality to the sick and ailing, so that the sufferer would be able to overcome their worry, their fear, or depression, and in that manner, assist in his own healing.

The remedies used in this method of treatment are all prepared from the flowers of wild plants, bushes, or trees. None of them are harmful or habit-forming. They are prescribed, not directly for the physical complaint, but rather according to the sufferer's state of mind, according to his moods of fear, worry, anger, or depression. According to Bach, "An inharmonious state of mind will not only hinder the recovery of health and retard convalescence, but it is the primary cause of sickness and disease."

As an example, the remedy for terror or extreme fear (rock rose) is given when the patient or those near and dear to him are seized with sheer terror, i.e., a panic attack. The nature of the condition, or the name of the disease, makes no difference. If terror is present, then the remedy for terror is the one, which the patient (and his family or friends about him) requires.

Along with this, a mixture of five Bach flowers, aptly named "Rescue Remedy," is good for general day-to-day fear and anxiety. This remedy is commonly used for anxious moments, e.g., before exams, visits to the dentist, or an important interview. Bach Remedies are benign in their action; they do not produce an unpleasant reaction. They are usually taken as a number of drops in a glass of water.

Both these herbal products are readily available in most health food stores, or over the Internet.

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight that there are always options when dealing with panic attacks. Never let your mind mislead you into believing there is no solution.

I am sure you will agree that the only true successful recovery is the one independent of any crutches such as alcohol, medication, or even an understanding partner or friend. The purpose of this book is to have individuals using the "One Move" technique, independent from outside crutches, so no matter where you are, or whomever you are with, you will never be afraid of having a panic attack.

Chapter 7

Tapping Into Your Hidden Potential

As we have seen, it is not the quickening of the heartbeat or the tightness of the chest that causes an individual to fear when a panic attack strikes. The fear is born out of a worry that says, “I can't cope with this, this is too much, I can't handle this situation.” Run, flee—escape.

Everyone has an ability to deal with stressful situations. The problem with panic attacks, however, is that by their very nature they attack that inner strength and over time leave one completely depleted of any confidence in their ability to handle stressful situations.

Use the techniques of both mind and body found in this book to replenish that depleted source of courage and confidence. Strengthen your ability to not only handle panic attacks, but anything life throws in your direction.

Here is a final booster tool to help.

We all know our character is determined by our experience. More precisely, it is determined by our memories of experiences gone by. The time you passed some very stressful exam, got the job you were after, and most of all, all the times you thought you might lose yourself to a panic attack—but maintained composure and succeeded.

These past successes are what enable us to have confidence in how we will handle the future. Panic attacks eat away at this confidence. If anything, they send the message that you can't handle the situation and the bodily sensations seem beyond your control. Any effort to control them only makes the situation worse. But what really happened? Even if

you could not hold it together as much as you would have liked, did your life end? Did you suffer serious bodily harm?

No. The panic attack came and, as always, it left. Now, armed with the techniques found here, especially the “One Move” technique, you will see how all future panic attacks will drift away as quickly as they come. Here lies your solid foundation to build your renewed confidence.

You build it on the past, on each time you succeeded.

Remind yourself of this always, not just when you are scared but each time you have a spare moment to yourself. Play that film again and again in your head, of all the times panic attacks came and left and you were not harmed; in fact, not only unharmed, but with practice, unmoved.

As with all good things, it takes practice. We are sadly not in the habit of focusing on our previous success, but stick with it.

You may even be feeling at this point that having a panic attack is not a courageous experience to be proud of. I disagree. Panic attacks are probably one of the most frightening experiences a person can go through. In most cases, the individual feels like having a brush with death itself and that is no small feat to deal with on your extended lunch break!

Be proud of your experiences—you are not a cowardly victim but a survivor of a terrifying experience, and what's more, you probably continued on at work the same day or collected the kids from school. You continued on living.

Bring in other times as well, unrelated to panic attacks, where you handled very difficult situations or maybe others were looking to you for support and reassurance.

If you are a long-term panic attack sufferer, then even better; you have a head start with a wealth of experiences to build upon. Sure, there may be

a few hairy memories in the past with panic attacks, you prefer to forget, but the underlying emotion to build upon is that you survived and you are here now, alive and living a new day.

Build a wealth of memories, and it will be your friend, a resource to draw upon. Write them down as that solidifies them and makes them more real in your mind. Read them to yourself regularly.

Confidence, just like fear, is contagious, and soon you will find it spreading to all areas of your life, giving you a quality of life even beyond your pre-panic attack days.

Conclusion

Apply the techniques of mind and body that we have discussed. Take it one day at time. Soon, you will look around and find yourself living a completely new, confident, fearless life. This book has been written for all individuals suffering from panic attacks but especially for those individuals who feel their lives will always be one of fear and terror. Your future will be bright. How do I know this? Because you have the technique that is changing the lives of so many people; you have made the first step by investing in your own well-being by purchasing this book. When you make the effort, success is a certainty. When dealing with panic attacks, it really always is darkest before the dawn.

If you wish to contact me please email me at joebarry@panicportal.com

(In your email please add the order number found on the email receipt that was emailed to you after making payment.)

To your bright future,

Joe Barry

References

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